

# THE BOY ALLIES

WITH THE

# FLYING SQUADRON

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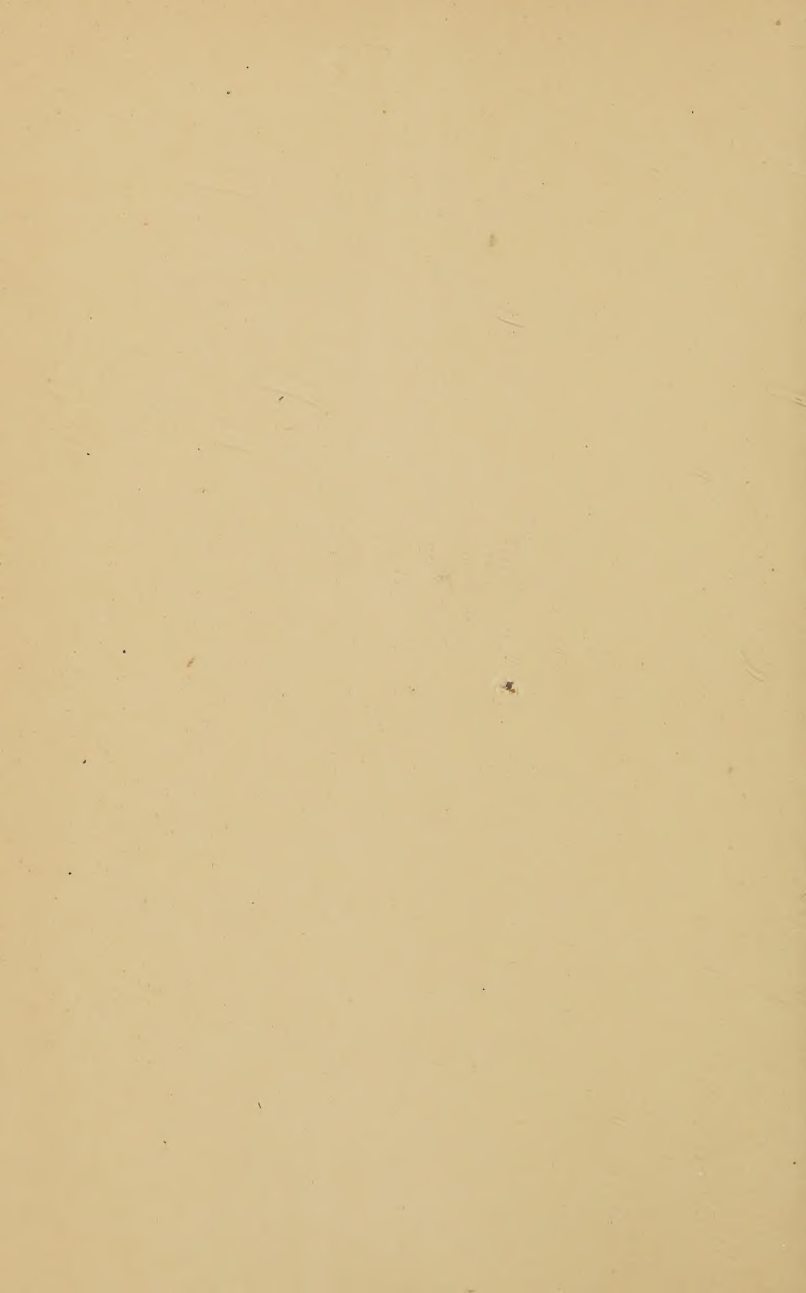





100  
Haldo Douglass Poiriere  
Christmas  
1916

S.S. Teacher

Addis Hudson







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THERE WAS A SINGLE SHOT AND THE JAPANESE OFFICER'S WEAPON DROPPED TO THE GROUND. Page 32.

*The Boy Allies With the Flying Squadron.*

# THE BOY ALLIES WITH THE FLYING SQUADRON.

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## CHAPTER I.

### IN THE PACIFIC.

"CLEAR for action!"

The voice of Lord Hastings, commander, rang out across the deck of the little scout cruiser *Sylph II*.

Every man aboard the craft jumped to his place. The gunners sprang to their posts, the range-finders leaped into position. At a command from Lord Hastings, Lieutenant Jack Templeton, first officer, signaled the engine room. The speed of the vessel was reduced to twelve knots.

Second Lieutenant Frank Chadwick superintended the movements of the men. Under his sharp commands the sailors in a few moments were ready for the work before them. Everything at last in readiness, all on deck turned their eyes to the north, where, approaching slowly, was a single ship of war.

It was a battle cruiser. Jack had been the first



to make her out, half an hour before. The *Sylph's* wireless was immediately brought into play, but the stranger paid no attention to the messages flashed to her. At last the two ships drew close enough together for those aboard the *Sylph* to make out the other's colors. They were German.

It was at that moment that Lord Hastings ordered the *Sylph* cleared for action.

Jack and Frank now stood beside their commander on the bridge.

"Doesn't look like the *Karlsruhe*, from the description I have had of her," said Jack.

"Too big for the *Karlsruhe*," Frank agreed.

"You are right, boys," said Lord Hastings; "but I didn't know there was another German war vessel in these waters."

"Nevertheless here comes one," said Jack.

The two vessels drew nearer.

"Boom!"

The forward gun of the *Sylph* spoke. A shell kicked up the water close to the approaching vessel. There was no reply from the stranger. Now the enemy, steaming very slowly, had approached close enough for those on the *Sylph* to make out her name.

"The *Hanover*!" cried Jack.

"Right you are," replied Lord Hastings, after a careful scrutiny.

A second shot from the *Sylph* failed to draw



fire from the *Hanover*, and Lord Hastings uttered an exclamation.

"What can be the reason she doesn't fire?" he said, half to himself.

"It is strange," said Frank.

"She certainly outranges us," said Jack slowly. "I can't imagine why she doesn't fire."

"There is something funny about it," said Lord Hastings. "With her heavier guns, there is no need for her to come within range of us. She could stand off and batter us before we could bring our guns to bear."

"Nevertheless, she is well within range now, sir," said Jack. "Shall we put a couple of shells into her?"

Lord Hastings hesitated.

"No," he said finally; "there is something mysterious about that cruiser. Let her approach closer, but have all the forward guns brought to bear, and keep them there."

Jack gave the necessary order, and then all turned their eyes to the *Hanover* again.

"By Jove!" muttered Frank. "There is something decidedly wrong there. I can feel it."

"And so can I," replied Jack, becoming conscious of a strange sensation for which he could not account.

By this time the German cruiser was less than a mile away. Bringing his glass to bear, Jack sought

to make out her commander. He swept the ship from stem to stern, but was unable to make out a single human form.

"Strange!" he muttered.

Lord Hastings and Frank, who had been engaged in a similar operation, also dropped their glasses to their sides with ejaculations.

"Where is her commander?" cried Frank. "Where are her officers? Where is the crew?"

"Exactly what I would like to know," replied Lord Hastings dryly.

Smoke poured from the enemy's funnels. Evidently she was traveling under a good head of steam. But on the decks of the vessel there was not a single living form.

Jack dropped his glass, and with his right fist smote the palm of his left hand with violence.

"I have it!" he cried.

"What?" demanded Lord Hastings and Frank in a single voice.

"She has been deserted!" cried Jack.

"Impossible!" ejaculated Frank. "Why should she be deserted? She is in perfect condition, has not been damaged by a shell, for I have looked her over carefully with my glass. Why should a great cruiser like that, in perfect fighting trim, be deserted."

"I don't know why," replied Jack, "but I would

stake anything I possess that there is not a soul aboard of her."

"We shall soon see," said Lord Hastings briefly.

He turned to Frank with a command, and then added to Jack: "It is plain there is not a man on deck. There is no one on the bridge, and I can make out that there is no one at the helm."

The German vessel was steaming at a speed of about eight knots. A few minutes later, Jack and Frank, in a small launch, with a crew of ten men, were lowered over the *Sylph's* side, and put off toward the *Hanover*. Twenty minutes later they scraped the side of the German vessel, and the two lads, revolvers in hand ready for instant use, clambered over the rail.

Aboard the vessel was the stillness of death. Not a sound came from any part of the ship save the steady throb of the engines.

Quickly the lads made their way to the bridge, and thence to the pilot house. Not a human being was in sight.

"It's uncanny," whispered Frank.

"I should say it is," agreed his chum.

In the pilot house, Jack approached the wheel. He drew back with a cry of surprise.

"It's been lashed!" he exclaimed.

It was true. The wheel of the German cruiser had been lashed with strong rope. The lads glanced at the ship's compass. She was heading due south.

"Now what do you suppose is the meaning of this?" demanded Jack.

"You know as much about it as I do," Frank returned.

They left the pilot house and explored other parts of the upper deck. Frank advanced to the forward gun turret, and drew back with a cry of amazement.

"What is it?" inquired Jack, advancing quickly toward him.

"The guns!" exclaimed Frank. "Where are the guns?"

Jack leaped forward and peered over his friend's shoulder. The turret was perfectly bare. The huge guns had been removed.

Quickly the lads renewed their search. There was not a single gun aboard the ship.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Frank. "What can be the matter?"

For a few moments Jack was silent, wrapped in thought. Then he said slowly:

"I believe I have hit upon the solution."

"You have!" cried Frank. "What is it?"

"Well," said Jack, "evidently the ship has been deserted for a purpose; but first the big guns were removed, that they might not be lost. I believe that the commander of the *Hanover*, knowing perfectly well the position of the British fleet, has loaded this cruiser with dynamite, started her on



her course, lashed the wheel, and with his men, put off to the *Karlsruhe*.

"Now, suppose the British admiral saw a single German vessel approaching. Secure in his own superior numbers, he would not pay much attention to it as it dashed in among his ships. But suppose the German ship succeeded in crashing into one of our vessels, with the others gathered all about? Can you imagine the result?"

"Can I?" said Frank. "Well, rather."

"Unless I am much mistaken," Jack continued, "a search below will prove the correctness of my theory."

"Well, we might as well have a look," said Frank.

Carefully the two lads made their way below. First they approached the engineroom and glanced at the furnaces. All were burning slowly, and it was apparent that they were coaled sufficiently to carry the *Hanover* many miles further on her course.

The lads made their way to the sailors' quarters. There they came upon the object of their search. Hundreds upon hundreds of boxes were piled about.

"This looks like the stuff," said Jack.

Exerting great strength, he succeeded in getting one of the boxes to his shoulder, and started on

deck with it. He stumbled once, and almost fell, and Frank cried out in alarm.

"Careful!" he exclaimed, "or you'll send us both to Kingdom Come!"

Gently the lad placed the box upon the deck, and after a few moments succeeded in opening it.

"Just as I expected," he said calmly.

He thrust a hand into the box, and drawing it forth held up for Frank's benefit a small stick of dynamite.

"Enough," he explained, "to blow up the ship—this one little piece."

He replaced it in the box and, exercising the utmost care, the two lads passed it to the men in the little launch trailing alongside.

"Dynamite!" said Jack, as the boys passed the box over. "Careful!"

"Now what are we going to do?" asked Frank.

"Well," said Jack, "this is too dangerous a thing to be floating about on the high sea. I guess we might as well put an end to it."

"How?" asked Frank.

"Blow her up," said Jack quietly.

"Suits me," declared Frank.

They set to work. Rummaging in the commander's quarters, Jack found a long fuse. This he attached to the dynamite below and making sure that it was timed to explode in not less than thirty minutes, hastened on deck.

"Quick!" he cried to Frank. "I don't know anything about dynamite, and I may have miscalculated. We'd best get away in a hurry."

They leaped into the little launch, and made all possible haste toward the *Sylph*. Here Jack related to Lord Hastings what he had done; then, as the little scout cruiser hurried out of the danger zone, all turned their eyes to the doomed German cruiser.

While they are thus engaged, we will take the time to introduce Jack and Frank to the reader.

## CHAPTER II.

## JACK AND FRANK.

JACK TEMPLETON, first officer aboard H. M. S. *Sylph* at the age of 21, and Frank Chadwick, possibly a year younger, the second officer, had become, since their first meeting, soon after the outbreak of the world's greatest war, the closest friends. Jack was an English boy. Frank was an American.

In Germany when the war began, Frank, with his father, had succeeded in escaping into Italy. Here the two became separated. Frank in Naples in search of his father had gone one day to the assistance of a sailor, apparently in trouble on the waterfront. He drove off the men who had attacked the sailor with knives. The man proved an ingrate and, in return for this kindness, had later aided in having him shanghaied.

When the boy returned to consciousness, he found himself aboard a little sloop, his destination unknown. There was a second prisoner aboard the schooner, who turned out to be a British secret service agent, on his way to Africa to play a leading rôle in the diplomatic coup that was to keep Italy



from going to the aid of her partners in the triple alliance, Germany and Austria.

There was a mutiny aboard the ship, and the captain, a hard man, was killed. The mutineers, still keeping the two prisoners below, turned about and headed for the coast of Africa. Here they went ashore, and it was through their efforts to get provisions without paying for them, that drew Jack Templeton into the story.

Practically all his life Jack had lived in the little African town, where he had gone with his father when he was still a baby. During these years, under the tutelage of his father, he had read widely and was consequently well educated.

Jack was huge in stature and great in strength. When the mutineers from the ship, after procuring goods at his little store—his since his father had died—had suddenly returned aboard their ship without paying for their purchases, the lad grew angry and followed them.

There was a fierce struggle aboard, but at length, by displaying great prowess and strategy, the lad finally succeeded in overcoming them. Then he released the two prisoners. Both lads, upon learning the mission of the secret agent, volunteered to help him in his task, and their offer was accepted.

The two played an important part in the diplomatic coup that was at length brought to a successful termination; and when their work had been

completed, returned to London aboard the *Sylph*, a pleasure yacht, the property of Lord Hastings, a second British diplomatic agent, though supposed to be a gentleman of leisure.

On the way the lads expressed a desire to join England's naval forces, and because of the valuable service they had rendered, Lord Hastings procured, from the king himself, their commissions as midshipmen. Then the *Sylph* was converted into a scout cruiser, with Lord Hastings in command, and the lads found that they were to serve under him.

Both Jack and Frank were proficient in the use of their fists, revolvers and the sword, for each, in his boyhood, had been taught these useful things. Lord Hastings, though apparently only the commander of a little scout cruiser, was nevertheless, as the boys had learned, an important personage and a distant relative of the king. In spite of his former obscurity, he outranked many of the high naval officers.

Jack and Frank, in the earlier days of the war, played an important part in the defeat of the German fleet off Helgoland. It was through their strategy that the Germans were lured into offering battle, which resulted in sending four of the Kaiser's big fighting ships to the bottom, as related in the "Boy Allies on the North Sea Patrol."

During this time they had many exciting adventures and narrow escapes, one of the most daring

coups being executed by Jack, who, in the face of heavy odds, succeeded in recapturing a prisoner who had fled to the neutral shores of Norway.

For these feats they were made lieutenants.

Following this, the lads had seen some service in the Mediterranean and later had participated in the sinking of the four German destroyers, which some days before had sunk the British warship *Hawke*. In this battle between German and British torpedo boats, the *Sylph* had been sunk. Jack and Frank were picked up by a German submarine.

They were aboard this vessel when it sunk a British warship, but later they succeeded in escaping and blowing up the vessel.

Picked up by another British cruiser, and believing that Lord Hastings had gone down with the *Sylph*, the lads joined the British ship, and went on patrol duty to Africa. They participated in the capture of a German colony. Sent home in charge of a captured German steamer, they had been sunk by the enemy. They were saved, however, and fell in with a French cruiser on the way to join the French fleet blockading the Austrians in the Adriatic.

Here, as narrated in "The Boy Allies Under Two Flags," they participated in a big naval battle, after which, much to their surprise, Lord Hastings bobbed up again in the *Sylph II*, and the lads rejoined their former commander. As all other officers

of the *Sylph* had perished, they were made first and second officers. They drew lots for the first position and Jack won.

From the Adriatic the *Sylph* sailed into the Indian Ocean, and here the lads played an important part in the chase of the German cruiser *Emden*, nicknamed "The Terror of the Seas," the chase resulting in the destruction of the *Emden* by the Australian cruiser *Sydney*. Then the boys, through the kindness of Lord Hastings, had been permitted to take part in a daring submarine raid upon three Turkish battleships at the mouth of the Euphrates river, in the Persian gulf.

The raid was successful and the three Turkish cruisers were sent to the bottom. The lads were by this time perfectly at home on a submarine, for the mysteries of the under-water fighters had been thoroughly explained to them.

On their way toward the North Sea once more, the *Sylph* had suddenly been ordered into the South Atlantic to join the British fleet under Admiral Sturdee, which was attempting to round up the German squadron in those waters.

By a ruse, through the resourcefulness of the two lads, the British admiral was able to take the enemy by surprise and send four of them to the bottom. Another of the German ships had been sunk by the *Sylph* after a desperate battle, and the little cruiser had headed into the Pacific on the trail



of the two remaining German cruisers. One of these was also overtaken and sent to the bottom, and then, with only one of the enemy still afloat, the *Sylph* had started out after her also.

This one remaining enemy was the German cruiser *Karlsruhe*. The vessel had been reported sunk more than once, but later it had always appeared again, and now the entire British fleet was in search of it.

The *Sylph* was on the trail of this ship, when she suddenly encountered another German cruiser bearing down on them. This proved to be the deserted war vessel *Hanover*, which the boys had boarded, and for the destruction of which all on board the *Sylph* were waiting patiently.

The *Sylph* having reached a point where Lord Hastings believed he could await the explosion with perfect safety, the engines were stopped and the little vessel halted. All eyes were strained toward the German cruiser, for if Jack had cut his fuse properly the end was now due.

Suddenly it came.

There was a terrible rumble and roar. As if by magic the German cruiser suddenly parted in half. More explosions followed, shattering the air with their violence. The forward section of the cruiser burst into flames, which spread rapidly.

Both ends of the vessel now settled slowly in the water. Then the afterpart also burst into fire.

As the fire ate its way up, the broken ship drew closer and closer to the water, until there came another terrific explosion, and the forepart of the ship suddenly disappeared from sight.

Probably a minute later there came another detonation from the half of the cruiser that still remained afloat. The fire glared redder than before. Then the stern of the vessel rose high in the air and seemed to split into a million pieces. These came down, and, burning, disappeared beneath the waters of the Pacific with a loud and angry hiss.

The German cruiser *Hanover* was no more.

Lord Hastings turned toward the two lads.

"Another one gone," he said briefly.

"May they all go as easily," said Jack.

"And if we had not happened upon it," said Frank, "there is no telling what damage it might have caused to the British fleet further south."

"True," said Lord Hastings.

He turned to Jack and gave a brief command. A moment later the bell in the engine-room tinkled, the engines throbbed, and gradually the *Sylph* got under way. Slowly she forged ahead, then faster and faster, and as she turned and headed once more toward the north the command rang out:

"Full speed ahead!"

Once more the little scout cruiser was on the trail of the German cruiser *Karlsruhe*, and Frank said to Jack:

"We'll get her, all right. It's only a question of time."

"The sooner the better," replied Jack.

Now the wireless of the *Sylph* suddenly came to life, and a moment later the operator approached Lord Hastings and handed him a message. Lord Hastings read it carefully, then turned to the two lads.

"Our chase of the *Karlsruhe* is ended," he said.

"What!" exclaimed Frank. "You mean she has been sunk?"

"No such luck," replied Lord Hastings. "We are ordered home again."

"But the *Karlsruhe*, sir?"

"I believe," said Lord Hastings, "that there are enough British ships in these waters to take care of the *Karlsruhe* without our assistance."

"I guess there is no doubt of that," agreed Jack; "but I would like to have been in at the death."

"And I," said Frank.

"Well, it is too bad," said Lord Hastings; "but orders must be obeyed."

The head of the *Sylph* was brought about, and she pointed her nose toward the southwest, heading for the Suez Canal and home.

## CHAPTER III.

## TSING-TAU.

IF those aboard the *Sylph* expected to go straight home they were doomed to disappointment. Fate, and the British Admiralty, decreed otherwise. Steaming along in the Pacific a new order, relayed many times, was flashed to Lord Hastings.

He called Jack to him.

"Our objective will be Tsing-Tau," he informed the lad. "We are going to lend the Japs a hand in the capture of that German fortress. You will shape our course accordingly."

Jack saluted, and after giving the necessary command, hurried to Frank, whom he informed of the sudden change in course.

"That will probably mean more fighting, at any rate," said Frank. "What's the difference what part of the world we are in as long as we are able to deal a blow to England's foes?"

"My sentiments exactly," replied Jack.

Day after day the *Sylph* steamed along without incident. The days lengthened into a week, and still the little scout cruiser continued on her course without interruption.

"The only thing that makes this inaction bearable," said Frank to Jack, "is the fact that we know we are going to some place. I hope we reach Tsing-Tau before the Germans surrender."

"I guess we shall," replied Jack. "The Germans have been giving a pretty good account of themselves there, as I understand it. They are said to have sunk several of the enemy. Besides, the Jap land forces have been able to accomplish little so far."

There was a tired and weary crew aboard the *Sylph* when the little vessel finally steamed into the bay of Kiao-Chau and joined the fleet of Japanese and British war vessels assembled there. Lord Hastings at once went aboard the flagship of the Japanese admiral to pay his respects, and returning reported to the lads the progress of the fighting.

"The admiral told me," he informed the boys, "that the final land assault probably will be made to-morrow, so you see we arrived none too soon. There will be little need for warships, so I am afraid you will see no fighting."

"But," said Jack, "wouldn't it be possible for us to go ashore and see the capture of the fort?"

"That might be possible," replied His Lordship slowly. "I will see if I can make arrangements for you to do so. Personally, I would just as soon remain here."

"How many British troops are there here?" asked Frank.

"I don't know exactly," replied Lord Hastings. "Something less than a thousand, though."

"And the Japanese, sir?"

"Almost forty-five thousand men."

"And what is the German force, sir?"

"It has been estimated at from seven to ten thousand."

"Then I can't see how the place has held out so long."

"It is a very strong fortress," Lord Hastings explained, "and it apparently has been defended with exceptional German skill and bravery."

At Lord Hastings' request, the Japanese Admiral gave his permission for the *Sylph* to land a launch, that the two boys might see something of fighting in the Orient. Once ashore the lads made their way with all possible haste to the front where they were warmly welcomed by the officer in command of the British troops.

"You have come just in time," he told the lads. "The grand assault will be made the first thing in the morning, and unless I am much mistaken, it will be the finishing touch."

"And how are the Japs as fighters, sir?" asked Frank.

"Excellent," was the reply. "Their bravery can-



not be surpassed, and the skill and generalship of their officers cannot be too highly praised."

The lads slept that night in the tent of a British lieutenant. They were up with the break of day the following morning, for they were anxious to miss nothing. In their experience they had seen but little land fighting, and they had a keen desire to witness regular troops at work.

It was the morning of November 7. The siege of the fortress had now lasted sixty-five days. The Japanese war office, at the beginning of the siege, had announced that it would fall in three months. But it was plain that the fortress would capitulate much sooner.

There came to the ears of the two lads the blast of a bugle. The British troops sprang to the positions before the echo had died away. To the left, the lads made out line after line of little brown-faced men clad in khaki, advancing to the assault at the double.

From ahead came a crash, followed by many more, as the German guns as yet unsilenced, opened upon them.

The British moved forward.

In spite of the fact that they were to take no part in the fighting, Frank and Jack followed close in the wake of the British troops. At last they came in sight of the fortress itself, and both lads cried out in amazement.

The solid rock walls had been battered almost to pieces by the great siege and naval guns of the Japanese and British forces. Breaches wide enough for five men to walk abreast had been cut in them. The whole works looked like the ruins of an old castle.

From behind these works the Germans poured forth their leaden messengers of death, and right into the thick of this leaden hail the British and Japanese infantry now charged. The defenders sprang to the breach to keep them out, and hurled back time after time, the allied forces were obliged to withdraw.

Several attempts were made to take the fortress by storm, but all met with the same fate. The commanders drew off their men, and once more the heavy field pieces broke into action, tearing and crumbling down the stone walls.

All morning this continued, but shortly after noon the Japanese commander ordered another charge. Side by side with their larger British allies, the little brown men charged. It was magnificent, and Jack and Frank, standing well back, cried out in wonder.

Great holes were cut in the ranks of the attacking party, but the troops faltered not. Now they sprang to the breaches in the walls, and then through them, right into the fortress itself. The big field guns had become silent when the infantry charged; and now the batteries of the fortress also grew

still. The guns could not be brought to bear upon the invaders inside the fortifications, and the presence of every man was needed in the effort to beat them back.

But this was impossible. Having gained a foothold on the inside of the fortress, the Japanese would not give back an inch. In vain, time after time, the Germans made gallant counter charges. Then, of a sudden, the fighting stopped. The roar of rifles ceased, the clash of steel was heard no more. The eyes of the two lads followed those of the troops, looking up and forward.

From the top of the inner fortifications floated a white flag. The siege of Tsing-Tau was over. The Germans had surrendered.

A great cheer rose from the thousands in the allied army. At a given command the Germans threw down their arms. An officer came forth and held a consultation with the Japanese commander. Terms were soon arranged, and it was decided that the fortress be formally surrendered three days later, November 10.

Jack and Frank advanced into the fortress with the British troops and looked about curiously. The signs of the terrific defense were plainly evident. Even beyond the strong walls the great shells of the Allies had penetrated, leaving death and ruin. The bodies of the dead were strewn about, and over them the visitors trod. Soon, however, arrangements

were made for the disposition of the bodies, and the work of preparing them for burial began.

Jack and Frank, strolling about inside the fortress, were arrested in their stride by a sudden cry for help. For a moment they could not make out the direction from which the cry came, and paused to listen. Then it came again, a shrill voice raised in terror.

"A woman!" cried Jack. "Come on, Frank!"

Quickly the lads dashed in the direction of the screams. Around two corners they ran, and then came upon the scene of the disturbance.

At one side of the narrow street a large automobile was drawn up, and as the boys rounded the corner they saw three men bodily lift a young woman and deposit her in the car. Then they also sprang in, and the machine made off at a smart pace.

The lads ran after the automobile. Straight ahead Frank perceived a second car, somewhat smaller than the first.

Now Frank, in his days in America, had had some experience with automobiles. Calling to Jack to follow, he jumped into the car and grasped the wheel. Jack was right behind him.

One glance about and Frank jumped out again and ran to the front of the car. He had perceived that it was not a self-starter and he now tugged at the crank with desperate energy. At last the ma-

chine began to snort, and Frank quickly leaped to the wheel again. Then the machine sped after the first, now some distance down the street.

Evidently the occupants of the first machine were not aware they were being followed, for the second car gained on them rapidly. Now, however, one man looked back at the pursuers and then shouted to the driver of the first car. Immediately it leaped ahead.

Frank also increased his speed, and, dashing along at perhaps fifty miles an hour, the two cars continued at their respective distances. To the very extremity of the little city, and beyond, the cars whirled by, pedestrians being forced to leap for their lives. Once a shot rang out and a bullet split the air over Frank's head. It was a signal to stop, but the lad paid no heed.

Along the narrow road sped the first car, with the second in hot pursuit. Now Frank saw that the first car was gradually drawing away from him. Try as he would, he could not coax his own machine to greater efforts. The pursued disappeared from sight around a turn in the road.

As the second car rounded the turn, Frank saw that there were two cross roads. There were therefore three directions in which the first car might have gone and the lad was forced to slow down.

"Now which way do you suppose they have gone?" he demanded of Jack.

"Straight ahead would be my guess," replied Jack. "They will probably figure that we expect they have turned off, and therefore go straight."

Without a word Frank sent the automobile straight ahead with a lurch, and the correctness of Jack's guess was soon proved.

Ten minutes later, apparently sure that their pursuers had been shaken off, the first car came into sight again, going more slowly. Frank let out a joyful shout, and Jack clutched the side of the car with both hands as it bore down upon the fugitives.



## CHAPTER IV.

## AN ADVENTURE ASHORE.

THE rumble of the pursuing car was borne to the ears of the occupants of the first, and the pursued were soon dashing along the road at a rapid gait again. Once more they gradually drew away from their pursuers and finally disappeared; but Frank had no mind to give up the chase.

"Faster!" cried Jack, from the rear seat.

"I can't get any more out of her!" Frank shouted back.

Flashing suddenly around a little turn in the road, Frank quickly shut off the motor, applied the brakes and cried out in alarm. Directly before him was the car he had been pursuing—empty!

By a tremendous effort the lad succeeded in avoiding the car that blocked the road, but so narrow was the margin that the two cars scraped together as the machine went by.

The next instant there came from the woods that lined each side of the road six revolver shots in quick succession. Both lads instinctively ducked their heads, and neither was hit.

Frank let the car out again, and was soon out of

range. Here he quickly brought it to a stop and the lads jumped to the ground.

Drawing their revolvers they dashed into the woods and turned back to where they had passed their prey. They came upon them sooner than they had expected. In the distance they saw a single khaki figure shading his eyes with his hand and peering toward them. He saw them at the same instant. Quickly his revolver flashed in the sunlight.

But before he could fire Frank's revolver spoke. The lad did not have time to raise his weapon, but fired from the hip. Again Frank proved, as he had upon more than one occasion, that he was a crack shot. The bullet sped true, and the man toppled to the ground.

Other figures now sprang up around him and several rifles broke into action. Unhurt after one volley from these long-range weapons, at a shouted command from Jack, Frank followed his friend in among the trees, out of sight of the enemy.

"No use standing out there and being shot up," said Jack quietly.

"I suppose you are right," replied Frank, "but we've got to do something. The woman needs help and we are here to see that she gets it. Another thing, though. Those fellows know we are near, and they'll be on the hunt for us. As you say, there is no sense exposing ourselves."

"Exactly," said Jack; "now—sh-h-h!"

He broke off suddenly.

"What's up?" demanded Frank.

Jack raised his hand for silence. From directly ahead of them, possibly two hundred yards away, came the sound of footsteps approaching stealthily.

"Come on!" said Jack. "Let's get away from here!"

He turned and took to his heels, Frank following him closely. For at least two hundred yards the boys ran before they came to a halt. Then, at Jack's suggestion, they made a wide detour and again set forth in the direction of the enemy.

Carefully and stealthily they plodded on and then, of a sudden, they saw before them a little tent. Peering around this they saw another, then a third and a fourth.

"Looks like we had stumbled upon their camp," said Jack.

"I guess that's what it is all right," agreed Frank. "We'll creep up and see if we can see anyone."

On hands and knees, their revolvers grasped in their hands ready for instant use, the lads crept to within a hundred feet of the nearest tent.

The tents had been raised in a little clearing in the woods, and the lads stopped behind a thick clump of trees at the very edge. Here they lay quiet and listened.

They could hear a confused murmur from one

of the tents beyond, but strain their ears as they would they could not make out what the conversation was about. Then there arose on the air the sound of a woman's screams.

The two lads jumped quickly to their feet and, throwing caution to the winds, dashed forward. With revolver held ready, Frank stuck his head in the nearest tent. There was no one there. Straight to the second tent the lads dashed. There was no one there either. But at the third tent, Frank, who entered first, beheld a fearful sight.

A young woman sat huddled in a chair in the corner of the tent, while over her, with drawn revolver, stood an officer. Frank cried out in amazement as he beheld the latter's uniform.

"Japanese!" he exclaimed.

The officer whirled upon him, his revolver rising quickly from his side; but Frank was too quick for him. There was a single shot, and the Japanese officer's weapon dropped to the ground, while the Jap, dancing madly about the tent, wrung his right hand and gave out cries of pain.

Frank's bullet had shattered the officer's revolver, and the shock had almost paralyzed the man's arm.

"Guard the entrance!" Frank shouted over his shoulder to his friend as he advanced upon the now defenseless Jap.

"One more move and you are a dead man!" he

said calmly. "Sit down on the floor and keep quiet!" enforcing his command with a gesture that could not be misunderstood.

The officer did as commanded, and the lad advanced to the side of the girl, who had now risen to her feet and stood facing her rescuer with a slight smile on her face.

"You came just in time," she said calmly, extending her hand to the lad.

She spoke in English, but with the slightest trace of an accent.

Frank bowed.

"My friend and I," he replied, "are glad to have been of service. You are German, are you not?"

"Yes," replied the girl. "My father, Colonel von Prow, is second in command at Tsing-Tau, or rather was, until the surrender to-day."

"And have you any idea why these men have bothered you?"

"Yes," replied the girl gravely, "I have. It is well known to the natives, and for that reason, probably, to the Japanese, that a large sum of money is secreted in the fortress. Of course, this will all be turned over to the Japanese commander by the commandant. These men have tried to secure it for themselves. I know where it is, and in some manner these men learned it. That officer," pointing to the Jap who sat on the floor, "was threaten-



ing to kill me, just as you entered, unless I revealed the hiding place."

Frank walked over to the Japanese officer.

"You cowardly whelp!" he said angrily. "So you make war on defenseless women, eh? I wish now that when I aimed it had been at your head."

The lad turned again to the girl, but as he would have spoken, there came a cry from Jack, on guard.

"Here they come!" he exclaimed.

Frank sprang to his friend's side in the entrance to the tent and peered ahead.

Advancing slowly toward the tent, apparently unaware of the presence of the two lads, came four Japanese soldiers. They were fully armed and both lads drew back out of sight.

Frank stirred the prostrate form of the Japanese officer in the tent with his foot.

"Get up!" he commanded.

The man pretended not to understand.

"He speaks English," said the girl.

Frank repeated the command and the Jap obeyed.

"Now," said Frank, poking the barrel of his automatic into the officer's chest, "go to the entrance and command your men to march into that next tent."

The Jap hesitated.

Frank moved the barrel of his revolver from his chest, so that he pointed squarely between his eyes.

"Quick!" he commanded. "Hesitate one moment longer and you are a dead man!"

The Jap advanced quickly to the entrance. In fact, he advanced so quickly that Frank became suspicious. He stepped after him and, standing out of sight from the outside, pressed his automatic against the Jap's back.

"One false move and it will be your last," he said quietly.

The boy's stern tone must have impressed the Japanese officer. He stepped outside, a moment before one of his men would have entered the tent. He waved them back with a quick gesture, and spoke to them in his native tongue. The men drew back, but did not enter the tent, as Frank had commanded.

Again the lad was suspicious.

"No tricks," he said quietly. "Do as I commanded you. We shall know by the actions of your men whether my orders have been obeyed. Quick!"

At this moment the girl advanced to Frank's side and whispered:

"I know something of Japanese. I can tell whether he is doing as you command."

Frank signified by a nod that he understood, and the girl took her stand close behind him as the Japanese officer again spoke to his men.

The girl nodded as he spoke, and Frank understood by this that his command was being obeyed.

The Japanese soldiers made their way to the

next tent. Then the officer turned upon the girl with a frown. It was plain to all that but for the fact that the girl understood Japanese, the officer would have played them false.

"Now," said Jack, "we shall have to find some way to get out of here without being seen. Even if this officer were to order his men not to molest us, they would not heed him, for they are in the plot as deep as he is and know that their lives would pay the penalty. We'll have to escape without being seen, or fight."

The girl now stepped forward.

"If you will give me a revolver," she said simply, "you will find that I can give a good account of myself."

Both lads glanced at her admiringly. Frank passed to her the second revolver he had taken from the Japanese officer. Then they sat down and talked the situation over. Suddenly Frank was struck with an idea. He turned to the girl.

"Miss von Prow," he said, "would you be afraid to remain in this tent with this Japanese officer, keeping him covered with his own revolver?"

"What are you going to do?" asked the girl in some alarm.

"Why," said Frank quietly, "I thought that in the night, Jack and I could overcome the sleeping Japanese, if you would be willing to guard this one,"

and he pointed at the officer who sat at one end of the tent in silence.

"No, I am not afraid of him," said the girl, "but it will be a desperate venture for you."

"Nevertheless," said Jack calmly, "it is one that we must take."

"But," said Frank, "I believe that we had better wait until dark, and the Japs are sleeping. We will be more certain of success."

After some further talk this plan was agreed upon.

Perhaps half an hour later there came the sound of footsteps approaching the tent from the outside. Quickly Jack sprang to the Japanese officer and pushed him toward the entrance, at the same time shoving his revolver barrel into his back. The others took their places behind them, and Frank said:

"Do you translate for us, Miss von Prow, that I may know what to order the officer to answer."

The soldiers stopped at the sight of their officer in the entrance of the tent. The officer replied as Frank commanded, when Miss von Prow translated. The conversation that ensued was this:

"Has she divulged the hiding place yet, sir?" asked the soldier.

"No," replied the officer, "but she will have done so before I leave this tent. We shall all spend the night in this spot. You men turn in now and get

some rest, so that you may be fit for an early start in the morning."

"We are not so sure she hasn't told you already," replied one of the soldiers. "You may be trying to get away with the treasure yourself. However, we will give you till morning; but remember, no tricks."

They withdrew and Frank ordered the Japanese officer back into the tent.

"The deuce!" said Jack, turning to Frank. "This makes it harder, for they will be on the watch to see that their officer doesn't give them the slip in the night!"



## CHAPTER V.

## THE PLOTTERS FOILED.

NIGHT fell and the boys prepared for action.

"I don't know as there is any use waiting for those fellows to go to sleep," said Jack. "The chances are they'll stay up to keep an eye on our prisoner here."

"Right you are," replied Frank. "We might as well act at once."

Jack pulled a chair right in front of the Japanese officer, and in this Miss von Prow took her seat, her revolver covering the prisoner with a firm hand.

"If he makes a single move, shoot!" Jack instructed her.

"Yes," Frank agreed; "shoot first and ask questions afterward."

"I'll guarantee to take care of him," said the girl firmly.

The prisoner uttered no word.

The two lads did not leave the tent by the entrance. Instead, dropping to their knees, and holding their automatics ready for instant use, they

crawled beneath the canvas at the rear. They were not noticed, and outside the tent arose to their feet.

It was perfectly dark without. There was no moon to light up the inky blackness of the night, and even the stars were hidden by dense black clouds that hung low over the earth, heralding the approach of a storm.

Very slowly and cautiously the boys approached the tent of the soldiers. Jack remained on the near side, and Frank crept around to the far side. Before parting the lads agreed upon a signal. It was to be one revolver shot, and both were to spring forward at the same moment. Frank was to fire as soon as he was ready.

Jack, on his knees to the left of the entrance to the tent, but still far enough around the side to be out of sight from the entrance itself, waited impatiently.

Frank, on hands and knees, crawled around the other side slowly and without a sound. Inside the tent there was a dim light, and by its glare shadowy forms could be seen moving about. Frank drew closer to the entrance on his side of the tent, and at last was in the desired position. He raised his revolver in the air.

Jack, on the opposite side, was on the alert, awaiting the signal.

Frank's finger pressed the trigger.

"Bang!"

He was on his feet in another instant and rushing toward the entrance to the tent. Jack also had sprung to his feet on the instant and joined his chum in his wild dash.

Neither hesitated at the entrance. The canvas flap gave way beneath them, and they were in the midst of the four Japanese soldiers almost before the latter knew it; although, at the sound of the shot the men had jumped to their feet and drawn their revolvers.

“Bang! Bang!”

The automatics of the two lads spoke almost together as they piled in upon their foes.

“Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!”

The weapons of the Japanese soldiers opened fire in return.

In the first volley from both sides, no one was hit. The two lads, firing at the moment of entrance, had been too hasty; and the Japs, taken by surprise, also fired wildly.

Jack and Frank, having dashed between their enemies to the far side of the tent, now stood side by side, and the leaden hail from their automatics swept the tent in a wide semi-circle.

Had the Japanese been the first to recover themselves, and had they been able to bring their weapons to bear as the boys were now doing, there is no doubt that the lads would have had the worst of the encounter.

But Jack and Frank had been too quick for their foes. Their movements had been too sudden, and before the ten shots had been fired from each lad's automatic, the four Japs lay on the ground.

The action had been quick and decisive.

Jack patted the barrel of his revolver.

"Great things, these automatics," he said quietly. "Couldn't do such execution with one of the old timers."

"Right!" replied Frank briefly.

He stepped to the side of the four Japs, who lay close together on the ground. He examined them carefully. Two were dead and the other two were groaning feebly.

Frank checked the flow of blood from the two wounded men as well as he could and then bound them securely with a strong rope he found in the tent. Then he rose to his feet.

"A good job done!" he said calmly to Jack.

"You bet!" was the latter's reply, and he would have said more had not the sound of a shot attracted their attention elsewhere.

The shot came from the direction of the tent they had so recently quitted—the tent in which Miss von Prow had been left to keep guard over the Japanese officer.

Neither lad paused for words. They dashed madly from the tent.

Jack was in the lead, and his long legs carried

him rapidly over the ground. Unmindful of any danger to himself that might lurk within the other tent and thinking only of the safety of the girl, Jack plunged inside.

A shot greeted his entrance.

The lad felt a slight sting in his left arm, and staggered back. Then he leaped forward again with Frank right behind him.

A second shot rang out, and a bullet whistled past Jack's ear and passed through the canvas of the tent into the air beyond.

Unheeding this, Jack sprang toward the far corner of the tent, where stood the Japanese officer, a smoking revolver grasped in his hand, an evil leer on his yellow face.

As Jack sprang forward he tripped over something he had not seen. It was the body of Miss von Prow, lying between him and the Japanese officer.

Jack fell heavily to the ground, which spoiled Frank's aim as he fired at the Jap.

Unharmcd, the Jap fell to the ground, and, before Frank could fire again, had squirmed beneath the canvas to the outside, where he took to his heels.

Leaving Jack to take care of himself and the girl—for he knew he had not been seriously hurt—Frank dashed after the Jap. The latter had a good



start, and by the time the lad emerged from beneath the tent, had disappeared into the woods.

Nevertheless Frank gave chase. Ahead of him he could hear the sounds of his quarry's footsteps, and he plunged rapidly after him, unmindful of his own danger. Farther and farther into the woods he went. He could no longer hear the footsteps of the Jap, but he continued his chase just the same.

After prowling about in the darkness, the lad finally gave up the pursuit.

"Just like looking for a needle in a haystack," he told himself. "I might as well go back."

He turned and retraced his steps.

Coming once more upon the tent, he stopped suddenly; for inside he made out the sound of a voice that was neither that of Jack nor Miss von Prow.

"Still, I have heard that voice some place before," the lad muttered.

Cautiously he approached the tent and peered in. Then he started back in surprise, and no wonder; for what his eyes had beheld in that one brief glance was this:

At the far end of the tent stood Jack and the girl, the hands of both were stretched high in the air, while standing in front of them, with leveled revolver, was the same Japanese officer that Frank a few moments before had pursued into the woods.

The latter, after giving Frank the slip, had dou-

bled back and reëntered the tent while the lad was still hunting for him. Drawing a bead upon the Jap with his revolver, Frank listened.

"So you thought you had me, eh?" said the Jap, with an evil chuckle. "Well, you see I have turned the tables on you." He shook his revolver threateningly at Jack. "Do you know what I am going to do with you?" he demanded.

"I don't know and I don't care," replied Jack angrily, and Frank could see that he was considering the advisability of hurling himself upon his foe.

"Well," said the Jap, "I am going to kill you right now!"

"Well," said Jack calmly, "you had better hurry up, or I shall beat you to it."

"What!" exclaimed the Jap, "you talk like that when I have you at my mercy?"

"Sure," said Jack. "Why not?"

The Japanese officer went on unheeding.

"And after I have disposed of you," he continued, "I shall see that Miss von Prow tells me where the treasure is hidden. Before I get through with her, she'll be glad to tell."

"I will never tell!" came quietly from the girl.

"Oh, yes, you will," sneered the Jap, "but first I must dispose of this English dog."

His finger tightened on the trigger of his revolver and Frank decided it was time for him to act.

Quietly he stepped into the tent. Jack and the girl perceived him instantly, but the Jap's back was turned to him. The expression in the eyes of Jack and the girl, however, must have warned the Jap, for he whirled suddenly.

At that moment Frank's revolver spoke. Just one shot he fired, but that was enough. The Jap's revolver flew from his hand, splintered, and once more the Japanese officer was at the lad's mercy.

"I suppose I should have killed you," said Frank quietly, "but I guess you will be safe enough now."

Quickly the officer was securely bound, and then Frank turned to the girl for an explanation.

"Just after the firing in the other tent," she explained, "I must have relaxed my vigilance, for the first thing I knew this man," pointing to the Jap, "had seized the revolver. I struggled with him, and succeeded in firing one shot into the air. Then he wrenched the weapon from my hand. I grappled with him again, but he threw me from him just before you entered the tent. The next I remember was when your friend," pointing to Jack, "succeeded in restoring me to consciousness."

"I thought you would get him when you went after him," said Jack, taking up the narrative, "and wasn't looking for him to pop in on us. Therefore, I was taken at a disadvantage. You saw how we were when you came in."

“Well,” said Frank, “he’ll make no more trouble. We’ll wait here till daylight, take the automobile and make tracks for Tsing-Tau. No doubt Miss von Prow’s father, as well as Lord Hastings, is greatly worried.”

## CHAPTER VI.

## BEIRUT.

THE return to Tsing-Tau the following morning was without incident. The Japanese officer and the two wounded soldiers were placed in the rear of the largest machine, securely bound, and gave no trouble on the way.

The formal surrender of Tsing-Tau as agreed upon the day before, would not be made till the succeeding day, and so Miss von Prow was able to guide the boys straight to her father's quarters. The latter was overjoyed to see his daughter safe and sound, and his anger at the Japanese officer and the two soldiers knew no bounds.

"So these are the kind of men to whom England looks for support," he sneered.

Jack was quick to resent this.

"These are not fair samples of the Japanese soldiers," he replied with some heat. "There are good and bad in all countries, Germany as well as Japan. These men will be punished, you may make sure of that."

The German officer apologized for his words and, thanking the boys heartily for the services they had

rendered him, bade them good-by. Miss von Prow was equally warm in her praise, and the lads finally took their leave with regret.

They made their way straight to the quarters of the British commanding officer where they related the plot of the Japs and its result. The British commander had the men placed under guard, and accompanied by the lads, sought out the Japanese commander, to whom he repeated the story.

The anger of the Japanese general was terrible to behold. Upon his command the prisoners were brought before him, and after berating them soundly for their conduct, he called an orderly and to him gave this command:

"Have them shot at once!"

He turned to the two lads.

"You are gallant youths," he said, "and have rendered me a great service. It will give me pleasure to have you stay and witness the execution."

The two lads drew back.

"No, thank you, sir," said Jack. "We have done our part; now we wish to go back aboard our vessel, for our commander is probably uneasy at our prolonged absence."

Frank also declined to be a witness to the execution; and so, being excused by the Japanese commander, returned aboard the *Sylph* with all possible haste.

Lord Hastings had indeed become anxious at the



long absence, and greeted them warmly as they made their way over the side.

"I was beginning to fear that you had been killed," he said, as he grasped each lad by the hand. "I have made inquiries, but no one seemed to have seen you after the final attack upon the fortress was made. Where have you been?"

Jack briefly recounted their adventures, and when he concluded, Lord Hastings smiled.

"It doesn't seem to make any difference what part of the world you are in you have adventures just the same. But now, I have news for you."

"Good news, sir?" asked both lads eagerly.

"Well, it depends upon how you look at it," was Lord Hastings' reply. "We have been ordered to join the allied fleet off the entrance of the Dardanelles. It wouldn't surprise me a bit if a passage were to be attempted."

"I should say that is good news," exclaimed Frank. "That means fighting."

"No doubt of it," echoed Jack quietly.

He was not a whit less enthusiastic than Frank, but, being English, he was not as demonstrative as his American chum.

"And when do we start?" demanded Frank.

"Immediately," returned Lord Hastings. "I have coaled while you were away, and we are ready to proceed this minute. Mr. Templeton, you may get under way, sir."

From the Yellow Sea into the Pacific, thence through the China Sea the *Sylph* steamed at full speed. At Singapore she put in for coal; then continued on her course through the Straits of Malacca into the Indian Ocean, through the Gulf of Aden into the Red Sea, and finally through the Suez Canal into the sunny waters of the Mediterranean without incident or accident.

Instead of standing out to sea and heading for the entrance of the Dardanelles, where the Allied fleet was gathered, the *Sylph* headed up the coast of Turkey in Asia.

At Port Said, where the *Sylph* again put in to coal, Lord Hastings heard startling reports of atrocities being committed by the Turks upon Christians. At Beirut, particularly, reports said, there was imminent danger of an uprising and a massacre. Therefore Lord Hastings determined to put in at this port.

When the *Sylph* put into Beirut there were already several vessels of war in the harbor, one Russian, one Frenchman, and another and larger vessel.

Frank took one look at the flag that flew on high over the latter vessel and let out a yell of delight. For from the masthead of the larger ship flew the Stars and Stripes. This vessel was the U. S. battleship *North Carolina*.

"There will be no massacre of Christians while she is here!" he exclaimed to Jack.

"I wouldn't be too sure," was the latter's response. "These Turks have no respect for anybody."

"They have respect for the United States of America!" replied Frank. "They haven't forgotten how we came over to Tripoli many years ago and cleaned 'em up."

Jack was forced to smile at the enthusiasm of his friend.

"We'll hope for the best, at any rate," he said quietly.

Lord Hastings exchanged visits with the commanders of the Russian and French cruisers. From them he learned just how serious the situation at Beirut really was, and this he repeated to the lads.

"There have already been several massacres," he said. "As near as I can find out there have been no Americans slain, or the United States warship yonder would have made her presence realized before now. She has been ordered here to protect American interests and lives.

"As you may see, the forts have not attacked us nor the Frenchman or Russian, probably because of the presence of the American vessel, which a chance shot might strike. That would mean international complications, which Turkey, at this stage, is anxious to avoid. For the same reason, neither the Russian nor the Frenchman has attacked the forts."

"How long shall we remain here?" asked Frank,

"We'll remain one day at least," replied Lord Hastings.

Upon the following morning, while Lord Hastings, Frank and Jack stood upon the bridge of the *Sylph*, Frank uttered a cry.

"What's the matter?" demanded Jack.

"Look!" cried the lad, and pointed to the American warship.

A small boat had put over the side and, filled with American bluejackets, was making for the shore, heading directly for the Turkish forts.

"What's the meaning of that, sir?" asked Frank of Lord Hastings.

"I can't say for certain," replied the commander of the *Sylph*, "but I would imagine the commander of the *North Carolina* has some demand to make of the Turkish commander. He has probably received grave tidings during the night and has sent an officer to demand an accounting."

Slowly the American sailors pulled toward the forts, which they were rapidly nearing, when, so suddenly as to almost take away the breath of those who watched on the *Sylph*, a puff of smoke issued from one of the Turkish forts, there came the boom of a single heavy gun, and a shot plowed up the water near the *North Carolina's* launch!

Lord Hastings uttered an exclamation.

"Great Scott!" he cried excitedly. "That is an act of war!"

Frank and Jack also exclaimed aloud, for both recognized the dire possibilities of that one shot.

The Stars and Stripes had been fired upon!

All eyes were turned upon the launch. A message was flashed from the *North Carolina*, and quickly the little craft turned around and put back to the battleship.

The *North Carolina* quickly got up steam and, as all watched her, she moved slowly nearer to the Turkish forts. Then a bugle rang out on her deck, and its clear note carried across the water.

"That," said Lord Hastings calmly to the two boys, "is a signal to clear for action! The Turks have put their foot into it this time and no mistake. Only a miracle can prevent a breach with the United States now!"

But the miracle came. Though none on the *Sylph* knew it then, and did not learn it for days to come, it was almost at that precise moment that a message from the President of the United States reached the commander of the *North Carolina* to take no action that would threaten the peace of the United States for any reason whatever.

The American President and his officials had recognized the gravity of the Turkish situation long before the *North Carolina's* launch had been fired upon, and their decision had been flashed to the commander of the American battleship in the nick of time.

Thus, by the narrowest of margins, the United States avoided being drawn into the great war!

At this time, however, as all warlike signs aboard the *North Carolina* vanished, Lord Hastings was greatly surprised, as was every other onlooker. Frank was greatly vexed and took no pains to conceal the fact.

"What's the matter with him?" he cried. "Is he afraid, or what?"

"I guess that is not it," replied Lord Hastings. "Certainly the commander of the *North Carolina* must have some good reason for not opening fire in the face of that insult, particularly after he had cleared for action."

"But what will be the result?" asked Jack.

"It all depends," replied Lord Hastings. "The United States will, of course, demand an apology. Turkey will either have to apologize or fight. She will undoubtedly apologize, for Germany, supporting her, has no mind to go to war with the United States, and will force an apology; also, Turkey will be called upon to give an explanation of that shot."

Lord Hastings was right. After many delays Turkey finally apologized for her act of war, the explanation offered to the United States being that the shot hurled at the *North Carolina's* launch was fired as a salute. Thus the matter was amicably settled.



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE DARDANELLES.

LORD HASTINGS now decided not to waste further time at Beirut, but to proceed on his way immediately. Therefore the *Sylph* left Beirut that afternoon and headed for the Dardanelles, where a strong allied French and British fleet was gathered.

Already this fleet had bombarded the outer forts guarding the Dardanelles, and the bombardment was continuing when the *Sylph* drew up to the fleet and took her station. She did not join in the bombardment, for her guns were not of sufficiently heavy caliber to permit of her approaching close enough to make her fire effective. Therefore, she stood off to render what aid she could in other ways, for the chief asset of the *Sylph* was her great speed. Although charted at but twenty knots, she nevertheless could outsail anything afloat, although this fact was known only to her officers, crew and higher British officials.

As Lord Hastings had said, it seemed to be the intention of the British and French admirals to force a passage of the Dardanelles. The outcome of such an attempt had formed one of the chief

topics of discussion over the whole of Europe for years. Could a passage of the Dardanelles be forced by a hostile fleet? That was the question. There were those who maintained that such a feat was impossible, while others had offered solutions of how it could be done.

Up to this time it had never been attempted. In the Turko-Italian war the other European powers had gotten together and induced Italy not to make the attempt. So it was still a big question to the world at large.

The Turks maintained that to force a passage of the Dardanelles was impossible. Not only was it strongly guarded by great forts, which mounted some of the newest and heaviest of guns, but it was well mined. The Turks considered it impregnable.

But, to clear a way to Constantinople, the Turkish capital, the Dardanelles must be forced, and now the allied fleet was at work battering the fortifications.

The Dardanelles, or the Hellespont, as it was formerly called, joins the Ægean Sea and the Sea of Marmora, through which the fleet must pass before reaching the Turkish capital, on the Bosphorus. The Russian fleet, in the Black Sea, also was engaged in the work of trying to reach Constantinople, and several battles had been fought close to the entrance of the Bosphorus, with advantage to neither side.

The Dardanelles, proper, is approximately a mile and a half wide, is about fifty miles long, and its depth is great. The strong forts must be demolished before an effort to force its passage could be thought of, and it was in this work the allied fleet was engaged. But, this done, there would still be the mines to contend with and several Turkish war vessels known to be lying in wait.

Upon the day that the *Sylph* joined the allied fleet before the entrance of the strait, a plan had been decided upon to strike a blow at the Turkish defense. A submarine raid into the very heart of the Dardanelles had been contemplated. But, as it happened, there was but one submarine with the allied fleet, and this was short-handed.

Now from the flagship was flashed a message:

"Two experienced men wanted for volunteers on submarine raid."

There were immediately many volunteers, but none had had experience. Frank and Jack approached Lord Hastings and requested that they be permitted to volunteer.

Lord Hastings was opposed to this plan.

"There are about ten chances to one against any who go in coming out alive," he told the lads. "I need you two too badly to allow you to take that chance."

But the demand for two volunteers was insistent, and finally, after repeated refusals, Lord Hastings

was forced to give his consent. He flashed a message to the flagship and received a reply that Lieutenant-Commander Holbrook, commander of the British submarine B-11, would come aboard the *Sylph*.

Half an hour later Commander Holbrook made his way over the side of the little scout cruiser, and was soon closeted with Lord Hastings. A few moments later Frank and Jack were sent for.

The British submarine commander grasped the hand of each lad heartily as Lord Hastings introduced them.

"Lord Hastings tells me," he said, "that you have participated in several submarine raids and know something about under-water craft."

"We are somewhat familiar with them," replied Frank, "but we wouldn't feel competent to go as officers."

"Good!" replied Commander Holbrook. "The chances are I shall not need you, but I am short-handed, and wish to prepare for any emergency. There will be little you can do if we are successful. Will you come aboard the B-11 with me now?"

Bidding Lord Hastings good-by, the lads accompanied Lieutenant-Commander Holbrook aboard his under-water fighting machine, and were soon made acquainted with the few members of the crew and also made perfectly at home.

Early the following morning the B-11 set forth on her perilous venture.

"One of our main difficulties," said Commander Holbrook to Frank and Jack—to whom he had taken an instinctive liking, and, for that reason, allowed to stand near him on the bridge—"will be the treacherous current of the Dardanelles. For that reason we shall remain on the surface as long as possible, diving only when we have to."

As the big guns of the British and French war-ships hurled their shells at the Turkish fortifications the B-11 approached the entrance of the narrow strait. Thus far she went without being discovered, and then a Turkish shell struck the water close to her.

Immediately all descended below, the conning tower and bridge were lowered, everything made air-tight, and the B-11 sunk until her periscope just cleared the water.

At the periscope, down below, stood Commander Holbrook himself.

The B-11 carried a powerful searchlight, and, even under the water, this lighted up the sea for a considerable distance ahead, probably two hundred feet. As the submarine felt her way cautiously along, a strict lookout was kept, that she might not run upon a mine.

And now Commander Holbrook, realizing that

Frank and Jack wished to be of service, set them to this task.

"Two are better than one," he said briefly.

Realizing the responsibility thus placed upon them, the lads put their minds upon the task, and from their position in the prow of the submarine peered through the thick glass partition with keen eyes.

The B-II was now well within the Dardanelles. Suddenly Frank saw something dead ahead in the glare of the searchlight.

"Mine dead ahead, sir!" he called out.

Commander Holbrook acted upon the instant. He gave a quick command. The B-II sank rapidly as her tanks were allowed to fill. Safe below the mine, her speed increased, and she passed under the dangerous explosive.

"This is a new wrinkle," said Jack to Frank, never taking his eyes from ahead for even an instant.

"What?" demanded Frank.

"Why, diving under a mine!"

Now the B-II rose again, until her periscope just cleared the water as before. A second mine Frank espied, and again the submarine dived and passed under it. A third time this happened, and a fourth. In all the B-II dived under five mines as she made her way along beneath the waters of the Darda-



nelles, seeking out the Turkish battleship, or battleships that guarded the mine fields at the other end.

This is history.

Now, Commander Holbrook, still standing at the periscope—which he had never left since the submarine sunk for the first time—made out through the instrument the giant hulk of a Turkish battleship. It was still some distance away, and, under the commander's guiding hand, the B-11 approached closer and closer, so that there might be no failure when the torpedo was launched.

The B-11 came close enough for the commander to make out the name of the Turkish battleship. It was the *Messudiyeh*. This Turkish battleship had a displacement of 10,000 tons, carried two 9-inch guns in turrets, twelve 6-inch, fourteen 3-inch, ten 6-pounders and two 3-pounders. Her armor consisted of a complete belt, twelve-inch amidships and seven-inch at the ends, and she had a complement of 600 officers and men.

It was toward this great warship that the B-11 now aimed her first torpedo.

The crew stood with their eyes glued to the electric signboard, from which they took their signals, given as the hand of the commander pressed certain small buttons. The gunner stood with his hand on the torpedo tube, having aimed it according to directions from his commander.

A command was flashed upon the board.

"Attention!" it read, in glowing red letters.

There was not a sound aboard the submarine but the purring of her motors and faint noises from the engine room. The gunner at the first torpedo tube stood ready.

A second command flashed upon the board:

"Fire!"

A faint metallic click—that was all. A little sound like this and the instrument of death and destruction sped on its way. One second passed, two, then three, and with the fourth the B-II careened crazily to one side, then rocked to and fro, as the waters thrashed about angrily.

"A hit!" cried the excited voice of the British sailor.

At a command from Commander Holbrook the water was forced from the various tanks and the B-II rose quickly to the surface. There the commander, Frank and Jack stepped to the bridge and looked at their handiwork.

Even now the prow of the Turkish vessel was rising higher in the air, as she sunk by the stern, where the torpedo had exploded, tearing a great hole in her. There came to the ears of those aboard the B-II the cries of anguish and despair, as men dashed hither and yon, in panic, aboard the sinking ship.

Commander Holbrook took a careful survey of the Dardanelles at this point. There was not an-

other vessel in sight, but from the forts along the banks the big guns now broke into a steady roar, as they hurled their shells at the daring submarine.

The three on the bridge descended below, and soon the B-11 was again safe below the waters. Down and down they went, the pressure upon the little craft becoming greater at every fathom. Commander Holbrook looked at his watch, which he wore on his wrist.

"We have been gone ten hours," he said.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Frank. "Why, it seems like less than an hour to me."

"And to me," agreed Jack.

"Nevertheless," replied the commander, "it has been ten. Going back we shall stay under the water entirely, keeping under the mines, and taking no chance of striking one as we arise. It will take us all of eight hours."

"Eight hours under water without coming to the surface once!" ejaculated Frank.

"Exactly!" replied the commander.

Jack gave vent to a long whistle.

"I didn't think it could be done," he said.

"It never has, to my knowledge," replied Commander Holbrook. "But it will have to be done this time."

The B-11 now started on her return journey, going along as fast as her commander deemed consistent with safety.

Frank and Jack, back at their posts in the prow of the vessel, kept a sharp lookout for all signs of obstruction; for, although the vessel was at greater depth than a warship would touch, still there was no telling what object they might encounter.

All this time not a man aboard the vessel had so much as closed his eyes. Six hours passed, seven, and then eight, and still the B-11 remained under water, continuing her course.

The ninth hour was up, when suddenly the B-11 began to rise. Once more her periscope protruded above the water, and Commander Holbrook took in the signs on the surface. He turned to his crew.

"Safe," he said laconically.

A moment more and the B-11, under water nine straight hours, rose in the midst of the allied fleet, where her presence was greeted with a cheer.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## HOMEWARD BOUND.

THE daring raid of the British submarine B-II, Lieutenant-Commander Holbrook, will live long as one of the most spectacular and bravest in the annals of Great Britain's naval successes.

Frank and Jack, complimented for their coolness under the water by Commander Holbrook, returned immediately aboard the *Sylph*, where they at once turned in, for they were tired out. Lord Hastings, therefore, was forced to wait till the following morning for an account of the raid.

The *Sylph* remained with the fleet off the Dardanelles for two days more, and then was suddenly ordered home.

"What for?" Jack wanted to know.

"Well," said Lord Hastings, "as near as I can make out, the government is fearful of raids by German submarines and aëroplanes. All vessels that are not absolutely needed elsewhere have been ordered back to patrol the coast."

"Have there been any such raids, sir?" queried Frank.

"One," replied Lord Hastings. "Four German submarines appeared off the harbor of Dover, but were frightened away before they could do any damage."

"Then why," asked Frank, "don't the British make some such raids themselves?"

"Well, to tell the truth," replied Lord Hastings, "some such thought has been troubling me."

"I have been studying the map pretty closely," continued Frank, "and I should say that, by a quick raid, a small British fleet might be able to get right into Cuxhaven, on the German coast, and deliver a telling blow. It might, at the same time, be accompanied by a fleet of airships."

"That's not a half-bad idea," exclaimed Lord Hastings. "I shall get into communication with the Admiralty at once and suggest it."

More than a week later, the *Sylph*, having traversed the length of the English channel, entered the strait of Dover and made for Dover harbor. It was night, and pitch black, as the little scout cruiser made for the port. A heavy rain was falling and a mist covered the sea.

As the *Sylph* came into the entrance of the harbor, Frank and Jack, who stood on deck in spite of the storm, made out a second vessel, approaching from the east. At first they paid little attention to her, believing that she was probably a British merchant ship.



The stranger drew closer to the *Sylph*. Then Frank got a good look at her.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, "a submarine tender, or I'm a cat."

"Yes," exclaimed Jack, "and a German at that, I am sure."

"Call Lord Hastings, quick!" shouted Frank, and Jack, not waiting to summon a sailor, dashed to the commander's cabin himself.

Lord Hastings, only half-dressed, rushed on deck. Frank pointed out the vessel to him.

"Pipe all hands to quarters!" roared Lord Hastings, as he himself took the wheel, "and clear for action!"

Almost in less time than it takes to tell it this was done. The crew, roused from their sleep, was wide awake in an instant. The guns were made ready for instant action.

But there was no enemy to be seen.

As yet the forts were silent. They had made out neither the *Sylph* nor the other mysterious craft.

"The forts should be aroused, sir, don't you think?" asked Frank of Lord Hastings.

"Immediately!" was the reply. "Fire a salvo from the forward guns. It will wake them up."

"Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!" spoke the forward guns in response to Frank's command.

Instantly the forts came to life. Searchlights that had been flashing somewhat sleepily over the

dark waters now skipped hither and thither with lightning rapidity. One rested full on the *Sylph*. A moment later and a shell crossed her bow.

"The fools!" cried Lord Hastings. "What are they firing at us for? Why don't they get after the enemy?"

"Looks like they take us for the enemy, sir," replied Jack. "I don't suppose they can make out our colors in this mist."

"True," replied his lordship. "Get them on the wireless, quick, and give them our identity."

Jack rushed away in compliance with this command. Still shells rained about the *Sylph*, for the officer in the fort had not yet been able to call off his men, but fortunately none struck the little vessel.

Then, suddenly, close to the *Sylph* again loomed up the German submarine tender. Lord Hastings perceived it on the instant, and, at a quick command, the starboard guns opened on it.

So close were the two vessels that a miss was impossible. The *Sylph* poured shell after shell into her, raking her from stem to stern. In three minutes she was helplessly disabled.

Almost at that moment the *Sylph* staggered back and quivered. From beneath the water line came the dull sound of an explosion. Slowly the vessel began to rise by the stern, her head dipping toward the water.

"We have been struck by a torpedo!" said Lord Hastings quietly. "Order out the boats!"

"But, sir," Jack protested, "the damage may not be great enough to necessitate leaving the *Sylph*."

"When a submarine torpedo strikes home," said Lord Hastings calmly, "there is little doubt that it will do its work. Order out the boats!"

Quickly the lad did as commanded and Frank carried this message to the wireless operator:

"We have been struck by torpedo and are sinking.  
(Signed) "HASTINGS."

"Send this, then jump for the boats!" Frank ordered.

The wireless operator nodded coolly, and as coolly ticked off the message. Then he made his way leisurely to the side of the *Sylph* and calmly jumped overboard. He was picked up by one of the men and hoisted into one of the small boats.

Lord Hastings, Jack and Frank were the last to leave the ship.

"The *Sylph II.* has gone to the bottom," said Lord Hastings calmly. "Well, it's the fortune of war!"

The little flotilla now made for the land as rapidly as possible. The German submarine tender, battered to pieces by the *Sylph*, before she herself

was torpedoed, was sinking slowly. This they could see as they passed.

An hour later Lord Hastings, Frank and Jack stepped ashore. They made their way immediately to the presence of the commander of the Dover fortifications. Here they learned that a submarine had been sighted.

"Half an hour after I received your wireless," said the commander of the fort, "a single German submarine was sighted. Whether this is the one that sank you, I can't say. There were probably more of them."

The channel forts were still firing. Morning dawned, and still they continued to hurl their shells far across the water. What damage they did, if any, it was impossible to ascertain.

The German submarine fleet had evidently made good its escape.

A torpedo boat flotilla now put to sea in pursuit. The Admiralty harbor, the finest harbor of refuge in the channel, where the Germans apparently had determined to wreak great damage to British shipping, had not suffered by the night raid, and this, without doubt, was due to the opportune arrival of the *Sylph*, and even more to the keen eyes of Frank and Jack, who had first discovered the presence of the enemy.

But the *Sylph* had paid the penalty for sinking the German submarine tender. With the approach

of morning Lord Hastings and the two boys sought to pick her up with their glasses; but they could get no sight of her. She had disappeared beneath the waves. Fortunately, however, all hands had had time to escape, and none was missing.

Said Lord Hastings:

"This morning I shall go to London, where I shall see the King. To him I will mention your plan of a raid on Cuxhaven, and, if it meets with his approval, I have no doubt that it can be accomplished successfully. Also, while there, I shall make some arrangements for a new command."

Jack was struck with a sudden idea. He broached it to Lord Hastings.

"Would it be possible," he asked, "for you to get command of a submarine, Lord Hastings?"

His Lordship started back in surprise.

"And why a submarine?" he asked.

"Well," said Jack, "a vessel like the *Sylph* is all right, but you can do much more damage with a submarine. Look what happened to the *Sylph*!"

"But it is much more dangerous," said Lord Hastings.

"What's the danger got to do with it?"

Lord Hastings smiled slightly.

"Well, maybe not much," he admitted. "But I know comparatively little about submarines."

"It wouldn't take long to learn," pleaded Jack.

"Besides, you could have someone that does know all about them with you."

"Still," mused Lord Hastings, "I don't know. If I were familiar with submarine navigation, I would say 'yes' in a minute; for I agree with you that it would be much more satisfactory than a vessel like the *Sylph*. There is much in favor of your plan: I have the loss of two *Sylphs* to avenge, and I may decide that I can best do it beneath the water."

"I hope you decide favorably," said Frank eagerly.

"Would you like to go to London with me?" asked Lord Hastings, after some further talk regarding the submarine.

"Indeed we would," replied Frank. "There is nothing for us to do here but wait until you come back or send for us. We might as well go with you."

"All right," was the reply. "We'll start soon after noon."

"Good!" exclaimed Frank. "And in the meantime, Lord Hastings, please think over the submarine idea."

"Very well," replied their commander with a laugh. "I shall think it over."

## CHAPTER IX.

## TREACHERY.

"HERE," said Lord Hastings, "are invitations to a ball in the King's palace to-night."

He extended them to Jack and Frank.

"For us?" asked the latter in surprise.

"Yes," was the reply. "I thought you would be glad to go."

"But," protested Jack, "we have no dress uniforms."

"My tailor will have them for you by to-night," said Lord Hastings.

"Then," said Frank, "we shall be glad to go."

This conversation took place the morning following their departure from Dover. Upon reaching London the evening previous, Lord Hastings had left the boys to make their way to his home alone, and he himself had gone immediately before the King. The lads had retired when he reached home, and so had not seen their commander again until at breakfast.

"I mentioned your plan for a raid on Cuxhaven to the King," Lord Hastings told Frank, "and he seemed greatly impressed with it. I wouldn't be



surprised to hear that such a raid had been ordered soon."

"In that event, I hope we shall be able to participate in it," declared Frank.

"Lord Hastings," said Jack, "there is something I would like to know. It has been bothering me."

"What is it?" asked his commander.

"How was it possible for those German submarines to get so close to the Admiralty harbor in Dover without striking a mine? It seems to me that without a map of our harbor defenses they wouldn't dare to take such chances."

"They wouldn't," replied Lord Hastings dryly.

"You mean that they have such maps?" in surprise.

"It would seem so."

"But I thought high naval officers, only, knew the location of the mines."

"That is what everyone has thought," replied Lord Hastings. "It would seem that someone has 'leaked.'"

"That means treachery!" Frank broke in.

"Exactly," said Lord Hastings quietly.

"Do you know whether the Admiralty has any idea who the traitor is?" asked Jack.

"There is no clew to the traitor," was the brief reply.

His Lordship was silent for some moments, and then continued: "I can safely say that there is no

doubt that the Germans have gained a knowledge of the location of the mines in the Admiralty harbor. How they obtained such information no one knows. Neither does anyone know whether they have secured maps of our other coast defenses; but the chances are that if they have one they have all. A careful investigation is being made."

Shortly after this conversation Lord Hastings left the house on business, and Frank and Jack, left to their own devices, went out for a stroll. London bore the same warlike aspect as it had the day of their first visit. Troops were being moved in all directions through the city.

Following the raid on the Admiralty harbor of the night before, troops were being thrown out all along the coast to watch for more of the enemy. The fear of a great raid on the British coast was growing. Also fears, felt at first and later abandoned as time progressed, of an attack by *aëroplanes*, or Zeppelin dirigibles, were renewed.

Half past nine o'clock that night found Frank and Jack among the brilliant and gaily bedecked crowd that thronged the palace at the King's ball. The highest dignitaries of the land were there, and the palace was indeed beautiful in its gay decorations, the magnificence of the dress uniforms of many military and naval officers adding to the scene.

The lads strolled about at will among the glittering throng, mingling with the British notables and

rubbing elbows with the *élite* of other lands. At length, after walking about for an hour, the lads took seats just off the ballroom, in a little alcove, partly hidden by a dense mass of shrubbery. Here they could catch the faint strains of the orchestra and occasional glimpses of the dancers that crowded the floor.

As the lads sat there silently the dance came to an end. A moment later a man in much lace and gold braid came into the alcove and sat down silently at the other side. From behind the shrubbery the lads could see him plainly. A moment later a second man appeared and sat down beside him.

"By Jove!" muttered Jack to his friend. "That first man looks like a German to me. At any rate, he's not English."

"He's a foreigner, all right," replied Frank.

The heads of the two men were now close together, and an occasional word, in German, came to the ears of the two boys.

"You are sure?" said one of the men.

"Perfectly," was the reply. "These maps are exact copies. They show the location of every mine on the English coast, and——" His voice died down, and the lads could hear no more.

They bent forward to listen:

"All is ready for the raid," came the voice of one of the men. "First, Hartlepool, then Scar——" Again his voice died down.

Frank and Jack were greatly excited now. Both lads realized in an instant they had inadvertently stumbled upon the manner in which the Germans had gained their information concerning the British coast defenses and the location of the mines.

At this moment the orchestra struck up again, and the two men rose and left their retreat.

Making sure that they were not seen, Frank and Jack followed them. The boys saw the two men take partners for the dance, and then returned to talk over the situation.

"Hadn't we better inform Lord Hastings at once?" asked Frank.

"I don't think so," was the reply. "Besides, it would be a feather in our caps if we could carry the thing through ourselves. The first thing to do, I should say, is to find out who the two men are."

"You are right," was the reply, "but how?"

"Come with me," said Jack, rising.

The two lads left the little alcove and made their way to the balcony. Here they sat down and leaned over the rail.

As the first man swept past with his partner, Jack turned to an officer who sat by his side and asked:

"Can you tell me who that gentleman is?" He pointed out the figure on the floor.

"Why, yes," replied the officer, "he is George Stille, secretary to one of the high admiralty officials."

At this moment the second of the conspirators swept by, and, answering Jack's question, the officer replied:

"That is Count Bernthol, a Bulgarian noble, who has been for years something of a mystery."

"A mystery?" repeated Jack.

"Yes; no one seems able to keep track of him. One day he is in London, and then he suddenly disappears, without a word, and months elapse before he is seen again."

The lads thanked the officer for his information, and made their way downstairs again. Here the first man they bumped into was Lord Hastings. By the excitement in their faces their commander saw that something was up, and, before they could get away, he took Frank by the arm and asked:

"What's up!"

"What's up?" repeated Frank, in well-simulated surprise.

"Yes; what are you so excited about? Have you discovered some great secret?"

Frank was slightly taken aback at this question; then Jack stepped forward and said:

"Frank, I guess, after all, we had better tell Lord Hastings what we have learned. The matter is too important to permit of taking chances."

The lads drew their commander into the little alcove, where they poured their story into his ears. If ever a man was surprised it was Lord Hastings.

"And so Stille is the traitor, eh?" said Lord Hastings grimly, when the whole story had been repeated to him. "Well, he will be taken care of. But about this attack on Hartlepool, you must be wrong there. Hartlepool is an unfortified town, and it would be against all rules of civilized warfare for it to be attacked."

"All we know is what we heard," said Frank. "But the little matter of being unfortified won't mean anything to the Germans."

"I can't believe that," replied Lord Hastings. "I don't believe even Germans would be barbarous enough for that."

"What are you going to do about the traitor and Count Bernthol?" asked Jack.

"They shall be attended to, never fear," was the reply. "Come with me."

The boys followed their commander to the far end of the palace, where they were left alone. Fifteen minutes later, however, Lord Hastings returned and with him some of the highest military and naval officials of Great Britain, among them Winston Churchill, first Lord of the Admiralty, Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George, and Earl Grey, the British Premier. To these men, not without some confusion, the lads repeated their story.

Exclamations of astonishment followed the conclusion of the lads' tale.

"Stille!" exclaimed Mr. Churchill.

"Well, why not Stille as well as another?" asked Earl Grey.

"Immediate action must be taken," said Lloyd George briefly. "The traitor and the spy must be arrested at once!"

"But," said Lord Hastings, "we must have more evidence. It is not probable that the unsupported word of these two boys would be taken against theirs."

"True," said Mr. Churchill. "What would you suggest, Lord Hastings?"

"My plan," was the quick reply, "would be to have additional maps prepared at once. Then, when Stille is making a copy of them, we can all watch. Let the arrest be made as he hands them to Count Bernthol."

"A good plan," said Lloyd George, "but Bernthol must be prevented from forwarding the maps he has to Germany."

Jack stepped forward.

"If you will allow us, sir," he said. "My friend and I will follow the spy, and we will guarantee that the maps do not leave his hand!"



## CHAPTER X.

## ON THE TRAIL.

THE three British statesmen turned upon the lad in surprise. Before any could speak, Lord Hastings had addressed them on behalf of the lads.

"I will vouch for these lads," he said quietly. "They have already rendered England more than one valuable service. If they are set to watch Bernthol, I will guarantee the papers will be safe."

"Stille," said Jack, "will not know that he is suspected unless Bernthol is put on his guard. It shall be our business to see that he is not. We shall simply be on hand to insure that Bernthol has no chance to turn the maps over to some one else."

And so it was arranged. Stille, unsuspecting, was allowed to go his way, Mr. Churchill having announced that other maps would be prepared and put where the traitor could have access to them. The two lads were to shadow the Bulgarian noble.

It was late when Count Bernthol made his way from the palace and ordered his carriage. Frank and Jack were ready. They jumped quickly into a taxicab they had called for just such a purpose, and set out in pursuit of their quarry.

Count Bernthol was driven straight to his London house in Belgrave Square. As the Bulgarian entered his door, the taxicab which had borne the lads along in pursuit pulled up a block away. Frank and Jack climbed out and walked quietly back toward Bernthol's home. Here they prowled about, seeking some means of entrance.

At the rear of the great house they came upon a small door, set well back in a little passageway. Frank tried the knob, and it turned. The door was open. Quickly both lads stepped inside, and closed the door behind them. Rapidly they walked along the narrow passageway in the darkness, and ascended a little stairway. This led to another dark and narrow passage, along which the lads crept silently. They brought up abruptly against what at first appeared to be a wall. Then Jack discerned that a streak of light came through from the room beyond, and made out that the obstruction was a door.

He laid his ear to the door and listened.

From beyond he could hear the faint sound of footsteps. He put his eye to the crack and drew back with a stifled exclamation. Frank now peered through the crack, and also drew back.

On the other side of the door, at a desk littered with papers, sat Count Bernthol. He was puffing a big cigar and looking over his papers leisurely.

Suddenly he looked up and glanced quickly about the room. For a moment Frank and Jack feared he

had discovered their presence, and drew back farther. There was no sound from the room beyond, however, and the lads ventured to look again.

Again Count Bernthol looked around, his glance presently traveling to the big square windows overlooking the grounds at the rear of the house. The window was opened, but screened, but the lace curtains were higher on one side than on the other. He arose and approached it, one hand in his coat pocket. He examined the copper wire mesh secured to the window. It had not been cut.

His examination of the window appeared to satisfy him that the curtain had been left carelessly uneven by the servants. Presently he opened a secret drawer in his desk and took some memoranda from a steel dispatch box. After studying it for possibly half an hour, he returned it to the box and closed the drawer.

All this time Frank and Jack stood silently watching him.

Count Bernthol now drew from his pocket several documents, which he placed in a second secret drawer and closed. Then he arose and left the room.

"Quick!" whispered Frank to Jack. "Perhaps we can get those papers. They look like maps to me. If we can get away with them undiscovered he will not know that he is suspected!"

The door gave silently before the lad's weight,

and Jack followed him stealthily into the room. Without a second's hesitation Frank walked over to the desk and sat down, Jack meanwhile standing guard with drawn revolver.

Frank now began a search for the secret drawer. After feeling carefully over every portion of the woodwork, his fingers at last touched something that seemed to be the head of a nail that had not been hammered entirely in—and firm pressure upon it caused a panel to swing outward. A little further manipulation forced an inner panel back, revealing the secret drawer.

Hastily Frank drew forth the batch of documents Count Bernthol had placed there a few moments before, and then quickly closed the drawer. But, before he could look at the papers he had thus confiscated, there came a cry of warning from Jack.

"Someone coming! Get back quick!" he cried.

Frank needed no urging, and sprang back into the little passageway, Jack close at his heels. They closed the door softly behind them, and stood listening.

Count Bernthol entered the room and seated himself at his desk once more. Apparently he did not know that his desk had been rifled in his absence, for he leaned back in his chair, and sat there quietly, deep in thought. Then, at length, he arose, called for his hat and coat, and left the room.

"Quick!" cried Jack. "We mustn't lose sight of him."

The lads traversed the passage as quickly as they could. But they were not to leave the house as easily as they had entered it. As they made their way to the passage on the lower floor and moved slowly along, they were suddenly arrested in their flight by the sounds of voices.

The lads stopped in their tracks.

Down the dark passage they could hear two men in conversation.

"I guess no one got in while we were gone," said a voice, in German.

"I guess not," was the reply. "Certainly we can relax our vigilance for five minutes. Nobody has ever tried to get in here."

"How are we going to get by them?" whispered Frank.

Jack drew his revolver and took a step forward; but Frank clapped his hand over the weapon.

"No shooting if we can help it!" he cried. "We don't want anyone to know we have been in here!"

"Well," demanded Jack, "how are we going to get out?"

Frank was silent for one brief moment. Then he said:

"Come! I have a plan."

At one side of the passage, as they made their way back, Frank had noticed a slight indentation in

the wall, large enough, however, he believed, for two men to step out of the main passage. Into this he now led his friend, and both crouched close against the wall.

Then Frank whistled loudly between his teeth.

"What was that?" came a voice from down the passageway.

"Somebody back there!" said a second voice. "Draw your gun and come on!"

There was the sound of hurried footsteps coming toward them, and both lads made themselves as small as possible. The two men brushed by, and started up the steps just beyond. In passing, they had come so close that the sleeve of the first had brushed Jack's face, and the lad was ready to spring upon them should he be discovered.

But the two men passed by without noticing the lads' presence.

Now that they were out of sight, Frank and Jack dashed silently down the dark passage and out the door, which they closed softly behind them.

For their waiting taxi they ran, and climbed into it just as Count Bernthol's machine left its stand in front of the house and started off in the other direction.

A word to the driver and the lads were on the trail again.

By the light of a passing street lamp Frank examined the papers he had taken from Bernthol's

desk. One look was enough, and the lad uttered a cry of consternation.

"What's the matter?" asked Jack anxiously.

"Matter!" repeated Frank. "The matter is that these are not the right papers!"

"Not the right papers!" exclaimed Jack in astonishment. "They certainly are the very ones Count Bernthol put in the secret drawer. I watched him closely, and I am sure you took the same papers."

"Oh, they are probably the ones he put in the drawer, all right," said Frank, "but the trouble is the ones he put in the secret drawer aren't the ones we thought they were."

"What are they?" asked Jack.

"Seem to be some sort of document relating to the military strength of the Allied forces," said Frank.

"Well," replied Jack, "they may be of some use. However, it's too bad we were not able to get the others also."

"We'll keep on the track of our friend and make sure that he doesn't give them to anyone, at any rate," said Frank, between tightly-shut lips.

"I wish," said Jack, "that we didn't have to be so polite. I wish we could go up and take them away from him."

"So do I," replied Frank grimly, "but that would spoil the whole business. However, we may get another opportunity."



And an opportunity came sooner than they expected.

Count Bernthol's machine now drew up before a little all-night café. The Bulgarian nobleman alighted and went in. Stopping their own machine at a discreet distance, the two lads followed him.

At a table in a far corner of the room sat the count. Before him was a bottle of wine.

"Suppose we shall have to order something if we want to stay here," said Frank.

A waiter approached and Jack, with the utmost *sang froid*, ordered a bottle of wine also. The waiter hurried away with their order.

"I don't want to drink any of it," said Jack. "What are we going to do?"

"I don't care for any, either," said Frank, "but I guess we can go through the pretense of drinking and pour it on the floor."

The waiter returned with the wine and filled their glasses. Frank tendered him a bill and told him to keep the change. The waiter took his departure, mumbling his thanks.

Another man entered the café at this moment and made his way straight to the table where Count Bernthol sat.

"Now," said Frank softly, "we shall have to keep our eyes open."

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE FIGHT FOR THE PAPERS.

COUNT BERNTHOL arose as the newcomer approached him. They bowed distantly to each other, then both sat down. The waiter was called and put a second bottle on the table.

The hour was now after three, and besides Frank, Jack, Count Bernthol and his friend, there was not a soul in the café.

Over their wine the count and his companion talked in low tones. Strain their ears as they would the lads could not make out the trend of the conversation, although at intervals they were able to catch a word or two.

Finally the count pushed back his chair and called loudly for his check. He was ready to go. So far the lads were absolutely certain the count had not passed any papers to his companion, for they had watched him like a hawk.

Now, from his wallet the count extracted a bill, which he gave to the waiter. Then he laid the wallet carelessly on the table.

The waiter departed and the two men arose to

go. The count went first, leaving his wallet on the table, apparently forgotten.

But Frank's keen eyes saw the second man pick it up and hurriedly thrust it into his breast pocket. Jack had not noticed the ruse, as the second man at that moment was hidden from him by the form of the count.

As the men left the café the two lads rose and followed them. At the door the count and his companion parted, the former climbing into his waiting taxi and the latter making off down the street afoot.

"We must follow the stranger," whispered Frank.

"Why?" queried Jack in surprise.

"I'll tell you later. Now, hush!"

The count's machine started off at a rapid gait, and the lads set out after his late companion.

Apparently unaware that he was followed the man moved along slowly, the lads at first contenting themselves with keeping him in sight. But, after walking several blocks, quickening their stride, Frank and Jack drew closer to their quarry. The man heard their footsteps, turned once and looked at them. Apparently satisfied they were not pursuing him he resumed his leisurely walk.

Coming to a side street the man turned down it. This left the lads in somewhat of a quandary. If they followed their quarry down the side street he would almost certainly realize that they were after

him, and would probably either run or fight. And yet they must not let him get away.

So far Jack had followed Frank's lead without question, although he had started to protest when Frank determined to follow the man and to allow Count Bernthol to go his way. Now he whispered:

"What are we following him for, anyway?"

"Never mind," Frank whispered back, "you'll see in a minute."

The lads now came to the corner, and turned down the side street. Not twenty paces ahead of them stood the man they were pursuing. Rounding the corner he had stopped suddenly and drawn his revolver, with which he now covered them.

"What do you want?" he demanded in a harsh voice.

The lads, taken by surprise, for the moment were unable to speak.

"You thought I didn't know you were following me, eh?" the man demanded. "You are fools! What do you want? Speak quickly, for this gun is liable to go off!"

"We want you," replied Frank calmly, now that he had recovered his composure.

The lad's right hand rested in the pocket of his coat, and in it he clutched his revolver.

"You fools!" cried the man. "You want me, eh? Well, why don't you take me?"

He swung the gun from one to the other and then back again.

"There are two of us," said Frank calmly. "One of us is sure to get you. You might as well give up."

"One of you won't get me."

His revolver was now pointed squarely at Jack's head, and Frank saw his finger tighten on the trigger.

"Bang! Bang!"

Two shots rang out almost as one, and, glancing quickly toward Jack, Frank saw that he was unharmed.

Frank had fired through his pocket and his bullet had struck his foe's weapon even as the latter pulled the trigger. The other's bullet had gone wide.

But the man was not injured, and before Frank could fire again his opponent had closed in on him. A knife flashed in the air, and would have been buried in the lad's breast, had not Jack, acting with cat-like quickness, sprang forward and grabbed the descending arm.

There was a crack, as Jack twisted the arm that held the knife, breaking it cleanly at the elbow, and the weapon went glinting to the sidewalk.

With one arm useless the man realized that he was helpless and gave up.

"You've got me," he said quietly.

And now, from down the street came rapidly

approaching footsteps, and the lads also heard the shrill blast of a policeman's whistle.

"Quick!" cried Frank, "drag him back to where our taxi waits. If we are arrested our work may go for naught!"

Dragging their prisoner between them they hurried back to their taxi. Their gait, thus hampered, was necessarily much slower than that of the hurrying officer of the law, who now hove into sight, running swiftly.

His whistle cut the stillness of the night, and from other streets other sharp blasts answered. Other policemen were coming to his aid.

But the lads were now beside their taxi. Quickly Frank flung open the door, hurled the prisoner inside and sprang in after him. Jack, shouting Lord Hastings's address to the frightened chauffeur, also jumped in.

In spite of his bewilderment and fright, the chauffeur had no mind to fall into the clutches of the law, and started the machine off with a lurch. The policeman fired twice at the speeding car, but the shots went wild. Five minutes later and the lads were safe from pursuit. Then, at a signal from Jack, the chauffeur reduced his speed.

"Now," said Jack to Frank, "maybe you will tell me what we want with this fellow, and why we are not on the trail of Count Bernthol."

Frank did not reply; but, instead, turned to their prisoner.

"I'll thank you for that wallet now," he said quietly.

"What wallet?" exclaimed the prisoner, manifesting surprise.

"Come, come, now," said Frank. "You know what wallet I mean. Pass it over, or I'll take it."

Slowly the man reached into his breast pocket with his uninjured hand and produced the wallet. Then, instead of passing it to the lad, he suddenly raised his hand and would have hurled it through the window had not Jack caught his upraised arm.

"None of that!" the lad said sternly.

In vain did the prisoner struggle. In Jack's strong grasp he was as weak as a child. With his free hand Jack plucked the wallet from the man's hand and passed it to Frank. Then he released his hold on the prisoner and sat back.

"Now," he said, addressing Frank, "what is in that wallet that you want?"

"You don't mean to tell me you haven't guessed it by this time?" said Frank.

"If I had," replied Jack somewhat testily, "I wouldn't ask you."

"Come, come," said Frank, laughing a little, "don't get mad. This wallet contains the maps we tried to get in Count Bernthol's home."

"What!" exclaimed Jack in surprise. Then more



calmly: "Maybe it does, but what I would like to know is how you know it? How did they get in this man's wallet?"

"This wallet," said Frank, "is the property of Count Bernthol."

"Then how did this man get it?"

"He gave it to him in the café a little while back," said Frank.

"Funny that you saw him and I didn't," muttered Jack.

"Not at all," said Frank. "Bernthol stood between you and the table while this man picked it up. It was just luck that I saw him do so."

"But are you sure they are the papers we are after?"

"Well, I'm not positive; but I shall make certain now."

From the wallet the lad extracted several papers, which he examined by the light of a passing street lamp. Then he sat back in his seat with a chuckle of satisfaction.

"These are the ones, all right," he said calmly.

At this moment the taxi pulled up before Lord Hastings's home. Alighting and holding their prisoner between them the lads paid and dismissed the chauffeur, then ascended the steps and rang the bell.

An astonished butler answered the door in his pajamas, and started back in surprise at the sight of the lads and their captive.

"Arouse Lord Hastings immediately," commanded Hal, when they were on the inside and the door had closed behind them.

The butler hurried to obey and in another moment Lord Hastings came dashing down the stairs.

"What's the matter?" he demanded.

"Nothing is the matter," replied Frank, with a laugh. "We have recovered the papers, that's all."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Lord Hastings. "That means that you have spoiled the whole thing. Bernthol and Stille will both be on their guard now."

"Oh, no, they won't," replied Frank. "We saw to that."

"Explain," said Lord Hastings briefly.

"Well," said Frank, "we allowed Bernthol to turn the documents over to his agent, and we captured the agent, papers and all. That's all there is to it."

"And Bernthol knows nothing of the capture?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Well, that alters the case," said Lord Hastings, with a smile. "For a moment I was afraid you had bungled the affair, but I should have known better."

Frank gave the documents to Lord Hastings, and then pointed to the prisoner.

"What shall we do with him, sir? He has a broken arm?"

"We'll have the arm set and keep him here out

of sight until we have sprung the *coup* on Stille and Bernthol," was the reply. "It would not do for either to learn that their agent had been apprehended."

"I am sure that is the best way, sir," was Jack's reply.

"All right, then; and now you lads had better get to bed. I will attend to your prisoner."

"A good suggestion," said Frank. "We are just about tired out."

## CHAPTER XII.

## TRAPPING THE PLOTTERS.

"WELL," said Lord Hastings to the two lads the next morning, for they were both up bright and early, in spite of their strenuous work of the night before, "I have just had word that the *coup* is about to be sprung."

"*Coup?*" questioned Jack.

"Yes. Late last night two additional maps were drawn, ostensibly of new mine fields, and were laid carelessly in Mr. Churchill's private office at the Admiralty. It is presumed that when Mr. Churchill goes out to luncheon to-day Stille will enter the office and copy them."

"Then he will be caught red-handed!" exclaimed Frank gleefully.

"He will, and, as you lads have played such an important part in this matter, you have been invited to 'be in at the death,' so to speak."

Frank's enthusiasm knew no bounds.

"We wouldn't miss it for anything, would we Jack?" he cried, slapping his friend on the back.

"I should say not," was the latter's reply.

Accordingly, shortly after noon, Frank, Jack and

Lord Hastings were in a little room adjoining Winston Churchill's private office in the Admiralty. Present also were Mr. Churchill and other officials. Several peep-holes had been made in the wall for the occasion.

"I am very regular in my habits," Mr. Churchill explained. "I go to luncheon at the same hour every day, and I invariably am gone an even sixty minutes. This is undoubtedly the time that Stille has done his treacherous work. I expect he will do the same to-day."

Suddenly there was the sound of footsteps, moving stealthily about in the next room. All put their eyes to the peep-holes.

It was Stille.

Hastily he ran over the assortment of papers, and then, seating himself at a long table, pulled two toward him. Then he drew from his pocket blank sheets of paper, and, with pen and ink, set rapidly to work.

For more than half an hour he worked quickly; then, putting the duplicates he had made into his pocket, he returned the maps where he had found them, and, glancing stealthily about, quickly left the office.

"Quick, now!" cried Mr. Churchill. "We must not lose sight of him!"

The four men and the two lads hastily left the room in which they had watched Stille at work and

entered the reception room just in time to see Stille go through the door. The latter did not see them.

In the street Stille hurried into a nearby shop and entered a public telephone booth. A moment later he came out, hailed a passing taxi, and was driven rapidly away.

Quickly his six pursuers jumped into a large automobile that stood nearby, and Mr. Churchill instructed the chauffeur to follow the taxi at a discreet distance.

Through the business section of the city they followed Stille, until at length, in the residential section, his taxi drew up at the door of a large restaurant.

"Probably the most fashionable restaurant in London," said Lord Hastings to the two lads, "and at the same time probably the most notorious."

Sure now that Stille would not see them the party alighted and Mr. Churchill led the way into the restaurant. The proprietor himself came forward. He recognized the British officials at first glance, and bowed low.

"A booth next to the man who just entered!" exclaimed Mr. Churchill. "Quick!"

The proprietor led the way. Down a long hall, between rows of booths, he led the way, and quietly stood back while they entered the booth—all but Mr. Churchill, who, as he passed in, took the restaurant proprietor by the arm.

"You'll come with us," he said quietly. "I will take no chance of your giving the alarm."

In vain did the proprietor protest. Mr. Churchill drew him firmly inside.

"Silence!" he whispered, and all sat down.

There was no sound from the next booth. Apparently Count Bernthol had not yet arrived; but he came a few minutes later. The sounds of voices in the next booth became audible, and the lads immediately recognized the tones of Count Bernthol.

"What is it you want with me?" he asked of Stille.

"I have more maps," was the low response.

"More!" exclaimed Bernthol. "So soon?"

"Yes; I found two on Churchill's desk when I entered his office at the noon hour to make my usual search."

"Good!" was the reply. "What are they?"

"Maps of mine fields to be laid down in the mouth of the Thames to-morrow."

"Excellent!" came the reply. "Give them to me."

"One moment," came Stille's voice. "When do I get paid for the others?"

"Come, come," exclaimed Bernthol impatiently. "This is no time for haggling. You will get your money when the maps have been delivered into the proper hands."

"That does not suit me," was the reply. "I want



some money now. I am hard pushed for cash, and I must have some."

"Well," temporized the count, "I can't pay you now; but I guess I can manage to let you have five hundred pounds on account. Will that help you any?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Give it to me."

Those in the next booth waited silently while Bernthol counted it out.

"Now," said the count, "give me the maps!"

"Here they are," was the reply.

It was at this moment that Mr. Churchill decided that the time had come to act. Silently he led the way from the booth, and stood in front of the one in which the conspirators sat. A revolver flashed in his hand.

"Guns ready?" he whispered. "There is no use taking chances!"

With one hand he parted the curtains and stepped quickly into the booth. Count Bernthol was so engrossed in the study of the maps before him that he did not notice the intruder.

But Stille saw his chief and jumped to his feet with a cry of fear.

"Sit down!" commanded Mr. Churchill in a stern voice.

Stille dropped back into his seat.

But, at Stille's cry, Count Bernthol had jumped to his feet. A revolver flashed in his right hand

and—as with his left he shoved the maps into his pocket—a shot rang out. The bullet missed Mr. Churchill by a hair's breadth; but, before the count could fire again, or before the First Lord of the British Admiralty could take any action to defend himself, a second revolver cracked, and Bernthol went tumbling to the floor.

Jack, perceiving Mr. Churchill's danger, had fired over the latter's shoulder.

Paying no more heed to Bernthol, Mr. Churchill turned upon Stille.

"So," he said sternly, "you are a traitor! You sell your country and your countrymen for German gold!"

Stille hung his head but made no reply.

"You are under arrest, sir," thundered Mr. Churchill, "and you have my promise that you shall die a traitor's death! Your name forever shall be upon the tongues of your countrymen with scorn and loathing! Walk out of here ahead of me!"

Cringing, Stille obeyed, and Mr. Churchill, with the other officials, followed, the latter with drawn revolvers.

But now there was a new disturbance. At Mr. Churchill's command, Lord Hastings bent over the fallen form of Count Bernthol to relieve him of the duplicate maps, and as he did so he was treated to one of the surprises of his life.

The left arm of the Bulgarian nobleman sud-

denly encircled his neck, and a revolver flashed into his face. But before the count could press the trigger Lord Hastings, with his free hand, had struck up the muzzle of the weapon, and the bullet was imbedded in the ceiling.

At the same moment the spy hurled Lord Hastings from him, and with a quick spring, was on his feet and flying down the passage between the row of booths. Jack and Frank were sent tumbling as he dashed between them. They had been just as much surprised as Lord Hastings and had not pulled themselves together quickly enough to intercept the fugitive.

But now the lads dashed in pursuit.

In leaving the booth the spy ran in the opposite direction to that taken by Mr. Churchill and the others. Jack, several paces ahead of Frank, fired at the count, but his aim was bad and the bullet went wild. Frank, a much surer shot, was unable to fire because of his friend in front of him.

Out of the passageway and into the main dining-room dashed the fugitive. Guests started to their feet in alarm. Women screamed and fainted; and when Jack and Frank, with drawn revolvers, dashed in among them, the disorder became a panic.

Hurling men and women right and left, Count Bernthol rushed through the room, and also hurling men and women right and left, the two lads dashed after him.

"Stop him!" cried Jack to two men near the door for which the count was dashing madly.

"Stop him!" cried Frank. "He is a German spy!"

The two men in the doorway, at these words, barred the fugitive's pass; but they were unarmed. Count Bernthol raised his weapon as he ran, and fired twice. One man toppled over quickly, and the other staggered back.

Bernthol dashed through the door and disappeared. The dining-room was in a tumult. The cry of "Spy!" had brought all the men to their senses, and they dashed after the fugitive; but none of them was armed, and they could not hope to capture him should they run him down.

Into the street after the fleeing spy dashed Frank and Jack. Outside, Jack's long legs came to his aid and gave him an advantage over the other pursuers.

A hundred yards ahead, Jack made out the flying figure of the spy, and he sprinted after him.

Bernthol easily shook off the rest of his pursuers, and had it not been for Jack, would undoubtedly have escaped; but Jack gained on him rapidly.

Realizing at last that he could not shake off this relentless pursuer, Bernthol halted suddenly in his tracks, turned, aimed point-blank at the lad, and fired.

Jack felt a sting in his left shoulder, but he did not falter in his stride. Again and again did the

Bulgarian fire at him; but he was nervous now, his hand trembled and his aim was poor.

With two more leaps Jack was upon his enemy. With one hand he took him by the throat, and with the other knocked the spy's revolver flying from his hand. Then, with a blow that would have felled an ox, he laid Count Bernthol low with a terrific smash.

The Bulgarian dropped without a sound. Jack, stooping over, picked the man up in his arms as though he had been a child, and made his way back to the restaurant. Frank joined him on the way and together they made their way straight through the main dining-room to where they had left Lord Hastings.

The boys were wildly cheered by the crowd of diners as they walked through the room, Jack bearing the unconscious form of the spy in his arms, for everyone in the place had learned by this time what the trouble was all about.

Mr. Churchill and the other officials, who had turned back as the spy made his dash for liberty, greeted Jack with warm words. All were loud in their praise of the manner in which he had captured the fugitive.

"You have done well indeed," said Mr. Churchill.

The two prisoners were loaded into an automobile and carted off to prison, where they were to remain until their trials could be arranged—and it

was known by all that their trials could have but one outcome.

Thus, through the efforts of the two lads, England was rid of two dangerous men, who, several weeks later, paid for their crime with their lives.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### AFLOAT ONCE MORE.

"WELL, boys, I have been given a new ship."

The speaker was Lord Hastings. It was the day after the capture of the German spy and the British traitor. Frank and Jack were in their commander's study.

"A submarine?" asked Frank anxiously.

"No," replied Lord Hastings, "and I am sorry." Frank's face fell.

"But," continued His Lordship, "it is possible that I may be given a submarine in the near future. I spoke to the King about it. There is a submarine now in process of construction, which will be completed in two weeks at the latest. It has several new and novel features. So far, I have learned, a commander has not been chosen. I may be fortunate enough to get it."

"I hope so," replied Frank. "In the meantime I guess we can content ourselves with another vessel."

"What kind of a ship is it, sir?" asked Jack.

"It is a small cruiser—much the same type as was the *Sylph*," replied Lord Hastings. "Her name is the *Northumberland* and she has a complement of



300 men. She is armored and carries much heavier guns than the *Sylph* mounted. We should be able to hold our own with any of the enemy's light cruisers. The *Northumberland* is of the same type as was the German cruiser *Emden*, and you remember how powerful she was."

"And when do we go aboard, sir?" asked Frank.

"Immediately," was the reply. "Our new ship lies at the mouth of the Thames. Can you be ready to start in an hour?"

"We can be ready in three minutes, sir," replied Jack.

"An hour is time enough," laughed Lord Hastings. "In the meantime I have some business matters to attend to. I shall return in an hour, then."

He left the lads alone.

Several hours later the lads found themselves dropping rapidly down the Thames in a small steamer, and eventually they made out in the distance the *Northumberland*.

The lads examined their new ship critically. Lying low in the water, she was a perfect specimen of an ocean greyhound. There was also an unusual size to her forward turret which impressed them favorably. Smoke poured from her three funnels in a dense cloud as they approached.

"She is all ready to sail, I see," remarked Jack.

"Yes," replied Lord Hastings. "We shall put to sea immediately."

"Where bound, sir?" asked Jack.

"North; up the coast."

"On any particular duty, sir?"

"Why, yes," replied Lord Hastings, smiling, "and it is because of you two lads that we are bound that way."

"Because of us, sir?" exclaimed Frank, in some surprise.

"Yes; after a consultation with Mr. Churchill, we came to the conclusion that there might be something in the contemplated raid you overheard Stille and Bernthol talking about."

"And you have figured out what the second town is? You remember all we heard was Scar——"

"The second town is undoubtedly Scarborough," was the reply. "It is another unfortified port. Also if these two places are attacked, Whitby is in danger. You see, the three towns are only a short distance apart."

The three friends now put over the side of the steamer in a small launch, and were soon aboard the *Northumberland*. As they clambered over the rail, the crew was drawn up at attention to receive their new commander, for word had been sent that Lord Hastings was coming aboard.

Three rousing British cheers greeted the newcomers—for Lord Hastings' reputation as a fighter was known—and an officer quickly advanced and saluted.

"I am Lieutenant Simpson, sir," he said. "I understand I am to be your third officer."

"Correct," replied Lord Hastings, returning the salute. "This," turning to Jack, "is Mr. Templeton, my first officer, and this," turning to Frank, "Mr. Chadwick, my second officer."

Both lads dispensed with formalities and extended their hands to Simpson, who grasped each in turn. Then Simpson showed Lord Hastings to his cabin, and next conducted the lads to theirs. All returned on deck immediately, where Lord Hastings made a short address to the crew, still standing at attention. Then he turned to Jack:

"You may get under way, Mr. Templeton."

The long line of sailors disappeared from the deck as if by magic. Every man sprang to his post. The engine-room crew already were in their places, and as the bell tinkled "fifteen knots ahead," the *Northumberland* began to move.

Lord Hastings summoned his officers to his cabin for a consultation.

"If it is true the Germans are contemplating a raid upon our unprotected coast towns," he said, "I am of the opinion that it would be well to put out to sea before heading north. There, directly opposite Hartlepool, but still out of sight, we will lay to and await results."

As none of the officers had a better plan to suggest, that of Lord Hastings was acted upon; and

shortly after the fall of darkness on the night of December 15, the *Northumberland* took up her station at the point selected.

"There are several patrol ships in the harbor of Hartlepool," Lord Hastings informed the two lads, "among them the *Patrol* and *Doon*, while in Scarborough harbor is a flotilla of torpedo craft. These should be able to ward off a German attack, unless it should be by cruisers and big battleships."

"But," said Frank, "aren't all the big German ships bottled up by our fleet in Helgoland and Kiel?"

"Well, they are supposed to be," replied Lord Hastings, "but you never can tell. Several of them have succeeded in running the blockade and are wandering about some place in the North Sea. However, it is unlikely that a squadron of any size could escape our fleet."

The night was very dark and a strict watch was maintained aboard the *Northumberland*. Lord Hastings, before turning in, left word that he was to be called if anything out of the ordinary transpired.

As morning drew near, a dense fog suddenly descended over the North Sea. Aboard the *Northumberland*, it was almost impossible for a man to see his hand before him. The great searchlight was not powerful enough to penetrate the fog.

It was Frank's watch, and as he stood leaning

over the rail he became conscious of a strange sound. He strained his ears to catch it. Again it came. In vain did the lad peer intently into the darkness about. The fog was impenetrable. He could see nothing.

The sound drew nearer. Again the boy listened intently.

"Sounds like a ship to me," he muttered to himself.

He gave a signal, and the siren on the *Northumberland* broke into action. Three sharp blasts were sent screaming across the water. Frank strained his ears to catch a reply to this danger signal.

None came.

Still the lad, leaning over the rail, was conscious of the same swishing sound.

"Sounds like the purl of the water beneath a ship," he muttered.

It came closer, and the lad was moved to action.

"I'd better call Lord Hastings," he exclaimed.

He did so, and a moment later the commander joined him on the bridge.

"What is it?" he asked anxiously.

Frank told him what he had heard.

"You did right to call me," said Lord Hastings.

With his night glass he peered intently across the water, but could see nothing.

Again they listened and again came the swishing sound.

"Sounds like a ship," Lord Hastings declared; "but if it is, it is remarkable that it should still be in the same spot where you heard it first."

"That thought struck me too," said Frank, "and I can find but one explanation."

"And that is——" prompted Lord Hastings.

"That there may be more than one ship, sir!"

Lord Hastings started back.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "I believe you have hit it!"

At this instant Jack also joined them upon the deck, and a moment later the third officer approached.

All stood silent and listened intently.

Again came the swishing sound.

"It's a ship," cried Lord Hastings, "and it is bound toward the coast. I can make that out. But there must be several of them."

"What shall we do, sir?" asked Jack.

"I should say that we had better run straight for Scarborough or Hartlepool," said Frank.

"No," said Lord Hastings, "we will wait and see if the fog will not lift. If it has not done so in an hour we shall make for the coast."

He returned to his cabin.

"Just the same," said Frank, "I am in favor of starting immediately. If the ships that passed us were Germans they will have an hour's start and

can do great damage to the coast towns before we arrive."

"You forget the patrol ships and the torpedo boats," said Jack.

"No I don't," replied Frank, "but they are likely to be caught unprepared."

"Let us hope not," said Jack fervently.

"Let us hope not indeed," said Frank.

The hour passed, and still the fog had not lifted, although it was now five o'clock in the morning of the sixteenth day of December.

Lord Hastings appeared on deck.

"You may get under way, Mr. Templeton," he said. "Shape your course due west."

"Very good, sir," replied Jack, saluting.

Another minute and the *Northumberland* was heading straight for Hartlepool, the smallest of the three coast towns, lying almost midway between Scarborough and Whitby.

"Well," said Jack, "if those were German vessels that passed us I hope we arrive in time."

"I suppose, if they were Germans, they must have been submarines moving on the surface," said Jack.

"What would you expect, cruisers?" asked Frank.

"Well, I didn't know," said Jack. "You never can tell."

"There is little likelihood of their being cruisers," said Lord Hastings. "They could hardly have



gotten through." He looked at his watch. "Five forty-five," he said. "We are an hour off Hartlepool."

"Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!"

The voices of great guns shattered the oppressive stillness!

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE GERMAN RAID.

WITHOUT waiting for a command from Lord Hastings Jack signaled the engine-room:

"Full speed ahead!"

A moment later and a bugle rang out on the *Northumberland*, calling the crew to quarters. In the quickest possible time the British cruiser had cleared for action!

And as yet none knew why the big guns had spoken.

But now, as the *Northumberland* dashed forward, the fog suddenly lifted, and, in the distance across the water, those aboard the British cruiser made out a sight that struck them speechless.

There, at a distance of perhaps ten miles, in close battle formation, riding on the even swell of the sea, were four German battle cruisers. And from each dense clouds of smoke arose, as they rained shell after shell upon the defenseless little town.

"Good heavens!" cried Lord Hastings, "and we are not within range!"

"They'll destroy the town!" exclaimed Frank.

"Where are the British ships?" demanded Jack.

The *Northumberland* dashed on toward the foe; and as she forges ahead we will here give a brief account of the German attack.

It was soon after daybreak that the German ships appeared off the harbor of Hartlepool and immediately opened a brisk fire. They were within easy range of the city, and the gunners threw an accurate fire that covered a great portion of the town.

At the first sound of the cannonade persons began rushing from their homes in a belief that a big naval battle was being fought off the coast. But they were quickly undeceived, and turning their faces from the waterfront, they hurried inland. Some of the bolder ones did approach the waterfront to watch the ships in action, but most of the population, as the shells began dropping into the city, fled.

Three churches, whose spires had evidently attracted the eyes of the German gunners, were soon demolished. Several shells fell into the plant of the municipal gas works, completely wrecking it. Shells ripped through buildings and plowed up the streets.

A panic ensued in the city. The British patrol boats in the harbor still lay at anchor. The reason for their inaction was this: They had no steam up. They were partly dismantled and had to be towed out from the docks before they could get into

action; and by this time, the German warships, having wreaked great damage, killing many civilians and destroying a great amount of property, made off.

Two turned in the direction of Whitby, while the other two steamed toward Scarborough. After shelling Whitby for perhaps fifteen minutes, the two German sea-fighters put to sea, and standing well off the coast waited for their sister ships, then engaged in the bombardment of Scarborough, to join them.

The *Northumberland*, bearing down upon the Germans at full speed, did not come within range quick enough to attack the German ships before they separated into two's and steamed away from Hartlepool. Immediately the *Northumberland* changed her course and made after the two approaching Whitby.

"The torpedo fleet will have to take care of the other two," said Lord Hastings calmly.

The *Northumberland* came within range of the two Germans as they were engaged in shelling Whitby. At the first fire from the *Northumberland* the Germans gave over the shelling of the defenseless town and immediately turned their attention to the British cruiser.

A well-directed shell from the *Northumberland* pierced one of the German cruisers and carried away part of her superstructure. Thus crippled the

Germans lost heart for further fighting and put to sea, with the *Northumberland* in pursuit.

At the same time the torpedo flotilla issued from Scarborough harbor to give battle to the Germans. The damage and loss of life in Scarborough was far greater than it had been in Hartlepool.

But now that the torpedo craft had put out to meet them, the Germans turned and fled. They ran toward their two sister ships, which had given over the bombardment of Whitby.

Word of the German raid had immediately been flashed up and down the coast of England, and from all directions British war vessels were approaching to intercept the German squadron.

Realizing that he had accomplished all he could hope to do, the German commander gave the order for a retreat.

The *Northumberland* attempted to intercept the juncture of the two portions of the German fleet, but failed. She was not as fast as the Germans, who not only prevented this maneuver, but also showed their heels to the British torpedo boats.

But the *Northumberland* was still within range and continued to hurl shells at the fleeing enemy, who fought back. The long-range duel was ineffective. Several German shells dropped near the *Northumberland*, but none near enough to do any damage.

The British succeeded in putting one more shot

aboard one of the enemy and were rewarded by the sight of a falling smokestack. What other damage the shell did there was no means of telling.

Gradually the Germans drew out of range, and at last were safe from pursuit. The only danger they had to avoid now was that of falling in with the British High Sea fleet as they made their way back to Kiel harbor.

This sea raid of the Germans was probably the most daring of the war up to date. From Kiel, 400 miles as the crow flies, they had carried the war to England. It was the first time that the British shores had been threatened by a hostile ship since John Paul Jones, the American sea fighter, had appeared off the coast of Scotland during the Revolution, and all England stood aghast.

The British Admiralty immediately took every precaution. The sea was quickly mined; the coast defenses were strengthened and Great Britain was at last aroused to the necessity of preparing to resist an invasion.

"Well," said Lord Hastings, when the German ships had drawn out of range, "this will be a pretty severe blow to England's pride. Where is all our wonderful navy, to allow four German cruisers to traverse the width of the North Sea and bombard our coast? That is the question the Admiralty will have to answer."

"Nevertheless," said Jack, "this German raid may be a good thing for the British cause."

"A good thing!" repeated Frank. "How do you make that out?"

"Well, for one thing," replied Jack, "it will wake England up. Up to this time she has been sleeping, safe in the belief that she was immune from attack."

"True," said Lord Hastings slowly. "It will mean that from this time on every Englishman worthy of the name will realize that his country is fighting for her very existence. Men will flock to the colors as they have not done up to this time. Yes, it may be a good thing for England."

"Well," said Frank, not convinced, "all I can say is that it has taken a good deal to wake 'em up."

"It is only too true," replied Lord Hastings.

In spite of the fact that the German ships were well out of range, and now were drawing slowly out of sight entirely, the *Northumberland* did not give up the chase.

"There is always the possibility," said Lord Hastings, "that they may encounter a British ship or two and have to stop to fight. In that event we shall be close enough to do some good at any rate."

All that day and all that night the British cruiser continued her hopeless chase, and when morning dawned she was nearer the Kiel harbor than she was to the coast of England.

Frank, peering over the rail of the ship the fol-



lowing morning, suddenly made out something, having the appearance of a mast, protruding several feet from the water some distance away. A second quick look and the lad cried out in alarm.

"What is the trouble now?" demanded Lord Hastings.

Frank pointed to the object in the water.

"A submarine!" he cried. "See the periscope."

Lord Hastings took in the situation instantly. At a quick command the *Northumberland's* forward turret were trained on the periscope.

"But it may be a British submarine!" cried Jack.

"No," Lord Hastings decided instantly, "there would be no reason for her to be hidden beneath the water."

He turned to the gunners.

"Take careful aim," he said quietly, "and hit it. Our lives may depend upon it!"

A moment later and the command rang out:

"Fire!"

Came the thunder of the forward turret guns followed by a cloud of smoke that enveloped the cruiser. Eagerly all strained their eyes to see the effect of the shot.

The periscope had disappeared.

"Due north, Mr. Templeton!" shouted Lord Hastings. "Full speed ahead! Quick!"

Jack gave the necessary commands—although he did not follow the workings of Lord Hastings' mind

—and a moment later the *Northumberland* sped off in a new course.

“I don’t know whether we hit her or whether she dived,” explained Lord Hastings. “However, that makes little difference. She must have sighted, and undoubtedly by this time has launched a torpedo at the spot where we lay.”

And this was true, although those aboard the *Northumberland* could not be sure of it.

But the aim of the British gunners had been true. One of the shells from the *Northumberland’s* guns had struck the periscope and splintered it. The German submarine, staggering beneath the water like a blind thing, had immediately fired a torpedo at the British cruiser. Lord Hastings’ quick action alone had saved the vessel.

The German submarine now had one of two courses open to her. Either she could make off beneath the sea, rising when she was sure she was out of range, or else, by a quick porpoise, she could rise, seek out the position of the *Northumberland*, and launch a second torpedo.

Lord Hastings believed the German would take the second course. The crew, now at their posts, made ready the big guns. These were trained upon the water in all directions, waiting for the submarine to rise.

“Fire the moment she exposes herself!” ordered Lord Hastings.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE END OF THE SUBMARINE.

ALL on board the *Northumberland* scanned the water eagerly. Each man knew what was expected of him and realized, as well, that to miss the German when she rose again would be practically equivalent to signing their own death warrants.

For the submarine, should it rise, would be upon the surface but a moment. In that time she could take in the position of the British cruiser, and, sinking immediately, could launch a second torpedo before the *Northumberland* could maneuver out of range.

The water stirred slightly on Frank's side of the vessel.

The lad cried out:

"Here she comes!"

Immediately all available guns were trained on the spot. And it was none too soon.

The German submarine suddenly appeared upon the surface of the sea, and would have sunk once more to safety.

But a perfect hail of shells greeted her as she emerged from beneath the waters, and before she

could sink she had been pierced through and through by British shells.

The aim of the British gunners was beyond comparison. Not a shot was wasted. Wounded unto death, the enemy lay for a brief moment upon the surface of the calm waters, and then sank suddenly, to rise no more.

Her officers and crew went to their deaths with her. Caught thus, escape was impossible. But they died bravely at their posts, as true sailors.

"Now that's what I call shooting, if you ask me," ejaculated Frank when all were sure that the enemy had been disposed of.

"Not half bad," agreed Jack dryly. "If it had been possible to sink her with a revolver shot, I should have suggested that it be left to you."

Frank smiled slightly, for he remembered how he had sent one German submarine to the bottom with a single revolver shot.

"I might not hit it every time," he replied.

Jack turned at a command from Lord Hastings.

"You may put about and run for London, sir," was the command.

Soon the *Northumberland* was dashing homeward.

"We shall have to be on the lookout for mines," said Lord Hastings, as they sped along. "It wouldn't surprise me a bit if the Germans, in making

their way back to Kiel, had strewn many of them about."

Indeed this was true, for the day following the German raid, several small British steamers had been sunk by the floating mines left behind by the Germans, and the North Sea had been ordered closed to navigation by the British government.

However, the *Northumberland* pursued her homeward journey in safety, and finally came to anchor in the mouth of the Thames without further incident.

Here Lord Hastings immediately got into communication with the Admiralty. After an exchange of messages he summoned the two lads to his cabin.

"I have news that will please you," he said to Frank.

"I am glad to hear that," was the lad's response. "What is it, sir?"

"Your suggestion has met with the approval of the Admiralty, and will be put into effect at once," was his commander's reply.

"You mean regarding the Cuxhaven raid, sir?"

"Yes. The Admiralty, after carefully considering all points of such a raid, has decided that it is worth trying."

Frank clapped his hands in delight.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "And shall we take our part in the raid, sir?"

"We certainly shall," returned Lord Hastings.

Jack's enthusiasm was no less than Frank's, and although he did not express his pleasure as loudly as did his chum, he was none the less pleased.

"And when shall we proceed, sir?" he asked.

"Well, not before to-morrow," replied His Lordship. "You see, it will first be necessary to gather the flying squadron that is to take part in the raid."

"About how many vessels, would you say?" asked Frank.

"I can't say positively, but you may make sure that we shall have a good-sized squadron, enough to give an account of ourselves if we are successful in avoiding the mines and getting into Cuxhaven."

"Oh, we'll get in all right," said Frank positively. "So far the British flag has never failed of the goal it has set out to attain."

"True," replied Lord Hastings calmly, "and let us hope this will not be the first failure."

"It will not be a failure, sir," Jack said quietly.

Lord Hastings looked at the lads and smiled.

"You two are the most positive lads I have ever seen," he declared. "You will never admit the possibility of failure."

"That," said Jack calmly, "is because we know it must be done, sir!"

But, for one reason after another, the proposed British raid on the German naval base at Cuxhaven was delayed from day to day.

Standing upon the bridge of the *Northumberland* one morning, Frank suddenly said to Jack:

"Do you know what day this is?"

"Why, yes," replied Jack, "Thursday, isn't it?"

"Yes," replied Frank with some sarcasm, "and do you know what to-morrow is?"

"Sure, Friday," said Jack briefly.

"And what else?"

"What else? Why, just Friday; that's all!"

"Why, you big chump," said Frank, "to-morrow is Christmas."

"So it is," replied Jack in some surprise. "I had forgotten all about it."

"And," continued Frank, "we haven't made that Cuxhaven raid yet."

"No," agreed Jack, "we haven't."

"But," Frank went on, "it wouldn't surprise me a bit if our Christmas present came in the form of the Cuxhaven raid."

"By Jove!" said Jack eagerly. "Do you think so?"

"I said it wouldn't surprise me."

"Well, I hope you are right. This inaction is about the limit. Here we have been lying idle for more than a week. It's about time for something to happen."

"Waiting," said Frank, "is about the most tedious job I know of. But I am sure that we won't be idle much longer."



"What makes you think so?"

"I don't know exactly; a hunch, I guess."

"A what?"

"A hunch," repeated Frank in some surprise.

"Don't you know what a hunch is?"

Jack said he did not.

"Well, by Jove!" Frank exclaimed. "I thought everybody knew what a hunch is. A hunch," he explained, "is good American for what you would call a premonition. By good American, I mean slang!"

"I see," laughed Jack. "Quite an expressive word, too."

"It's all of that," replied Frank dryly. "So it's a hunch that tells me we are to move away from here to-morrow."

"Well," said Jack, "I hope it's a perfectly good hunch."

Frank's premonition came true.

At noon that day—the day before Christmas—Lord Hastings returned aboard the *Northumberland* from a visit ashore. He summoned the lads to him.

"We make our raid on Cuxhaven to-morrow," guessed Frank, as the two lads entered their commander's cabin.

"How did you know?" asked Lord Hastings in surprise. "I thought it had been kept a secret."

"He had a hunch," spoke up Jack dryly.

Lord Hastings smiled. Plainly he was more familiar than Jack with American slang.

"You have guessed it," he said. "We shall leave here within the hour."

"How many ships, sir?" asked Frank quickly.

"Four," replied Lord Hastings; "the *Northumberland*, the *Arethusa*, the *Undaunted* and the *Pheasant*."

"All cruisers, sir?"

"All cruisers. But, and this may disappoint you, the chief raid will not be made by the cruisers, but by airships—seaplanes. So far, we have had no use for our hydroplanes aboard the *Northumberland*, but they will come in handy in this raid."

"But can't Jack and I go with one of the 'planes, sir?" asked Frank eagerly.

Lord Hastings was somewhat taken aback.

"Don't you remember, sir," pleaded Frank, "that we have had service in the air? We were with the air fleet in the battle of the Adriatic."

"And do you remember what a narrow escape from death you both had?" asked Lord Hastings grimly.

"Yes, sir, but that would hardly be likely to happen again. Will you give your permission, sir?"

Jack added his entreaties to Frank's. But Lord Hastings withheld his consent.

"I'll think it over," he said rising, signifying that the interview was at an end.

And with this the lads were forced to be content.

Half an hour later the *Northumberland* slowly got under way, and soon had put considerable distance between herself and the shore. Some distance off shore she was joined by the other three cruisers, and all made off, at full speed, for Cuxhaven, one of the German main naval bases, where they would attempt to deliver a crushing blow to the German fleet.

Jack and Frank, standing on the bridge as the ship plowed through the waters of the North Sea, were filled with joy.

"Here," said Frank, "is where we strike a telling blow at the Germans."

"Let us hope so," replied Jack quietly.

The British squadron gathered headway.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE RAID.

"OFF there," said Lord Hastings, pointing to the south, "lies Helgoland."

"And by what route will we get in, sir?" asked Jack.

"Passing Helgoland," replied Lord Hastings, "we shall run close in to the German coast, and turning south, will make for the mouth of the Elbe river. There we shall lay to, while the hydroplanes make their attacks."

"But isn't running between Helgoland and the German coast pretty ticklish work?" asked Jack.

"German naval authorities," said Lord Hastings, "have declared it an impossibility; and because of this, we are counting somewhat on their unpreparedness."

It was two o'clock of the afternoon on Christmas Day when this conversation took place aboard the *Northumberland*, the second ship of the British raiding squadron.

The cruiser *Undaunted* was showing the way in. Behind the *Northumberland* came the *Arethusa* and the *Pheasant*, all first-class battle cruisers.

At five o'clock the *Undaunted* signaled a halt.

"We are now just out of sight of the mouth of the Elbe," said Lord Hastings, after taking an observation.

At a second signal from the *Undaunted* the seaplanes were brought out and lowered into the water. Then came the command for which Frank and Jack had been eagerly waiting.

"Mr. Templeton! Mr. Chadwick!" called Lord Hastings. "You may man the first 'plane!"

The commander of the *Northumberland* had agreed to the boys' proposal.

The lads jumped to obey, and a few moments later were in their seats. The man who was to pilot the craft was already in his place, and all sat now awaiting the command to rise.

An instant later it came.

Skimming gently over the water, seven British seaplanes soon rose in the air. For a few minutes they circled about the squadron in the gathering darkness, awaiting the command to dash forward.

Suddenly one of the air craft darted off bearing a trifle to the south as it headed west. Immediately the others fell in line and followed the leader.

With the swiftness of the wind they approached the German naval base of Cuxhaven.

As the airships sped toward Cuxhaven, the British cruisers—riding quietly on the water awaiting their return—were suddenly the center of a

huge circle of light. Flashlights of German war-ships off Helgoland played full upon them, and several of the enemy ventured forward to the attack.

And above them, flying swiftly, soared two huge Zeppelin dirigibles.

The British cruisers opened upon these enemies promptly, and under a deadly fire the Germans withdrew after an hour of fighting. Even the Zeppelins were fearful of encountering the fire of the British vessels.

In the meantime the British air flotilla was nearing Cuxhaven. Now, below them, the lads could make out the German fortifications. A bomb from the first 'plane went hurtling below, and an instant later the sound of a terrific explosion reached the lads' ears.

But they were unable to see what damage the bomb had done.

Lower and lower dropped the British 'planes, in spite of the storm of lead that swept the air about them.

Directly over a large building of some kind—the lads could not make it out very plainly—Frank dropped a bomb. Jack hurled a second after it. Two explosions followed in quick succession, and cries of fear and despair ascended to the boys' ears.

"We hit something!" cried Frank, barely making

himself heard above the roar of battle and the whirring of the *aéroplane*.

Jack made no reply, but instead, dropped another bomb.

Each airman, taking careful aim, was now dropping bombs overboard as fast as he could. The fire from below was ineffective and the British so far had suffered no damage.

Straight on over the outer fortifications the British air fleet flew, to the very extremity of the German town, dropping bomb after bomb as they progressed.

Below, the people were in a panic. As great bombs fell and burst in the streets, plowing them up, killing and maiming those in their way, people cried out in fear and fled toward the interior.

Buildings, wrecked by the projectiles from the air, toppled over on them and buried them. Fires broke out in several parts of the town almost simultaneously.

And still the hail of death from above continued.

In vain did the German guns on the forts strive to drive off the enemy. The British air fleet, darting hither and thither, was untouched.

For an hour they continued to rain explosives upon the fortifications and the city below. The havoc was terrible, and the streets below presented a pitiful aspect.

But it was war.



After bombarding the town for more than an hour, the British air fleet drew off in the darkness, speeding hurriedly back to the protection of the cruisers as a hostile air fleet of the enemy, outnumbering the British four to one, suddenly appeared from inland and gave chase.

One, two, three, four, five 'planes returned to safety. Frank and Jack, having given the word to return when the other aircraft made off, were last in line of retreat. Now, as the hostile airmen bore down on them, the lads brought their rifles to bear, in this manner protecting, as well as they could, the retreat of the others.

Suddenly the British aircraft directly ahead of them also halted in its stride, turned abruptly, and presented its front to the enemy. The sharp crack of a rifle split the air, and one of the German 'planes turned turtle and went hurtling to the sea below.

But the others closed in.

For some minutes the two British aircraft continued on their way, flying close together and pouring a rain of bullets upon the foe. Then the other seaplane turned and made off, and Frank saw a hand wave for them to follow.

Quickly he shouted the necessary order to the pilot.

A minute later the British 'plane they were now following swerved suddenly and headed inland.

Frank and Jack were not slow in making out the reason for this maneuver.

From across the sea, like a cloud in the sky, appeared a second fleet of German airships. Between the two hostile forces, the two British craft would have stood no chance. But by thus veering from their original course they were well in advance of all pursuers, and darted away at full speed, the enemy in full chase.

Apparently the British 'planes were much swifter than those of the enemy for the enemy soon dropped out of sight.

Following the lead of the 'plane in front of them, the lads allowed their craft to glide nearer toward the earth. At last they were flying just above the treetops.

In a little clearing, in the very center of a somewhat extended forest, the first British aircraft came to earth and its occupants—two in number—stepped out. A few moments later Frank and Jack stood by their sides.

The British officer approached the two lads.

"I am Flight Commander Hewlett," he said extending his hand.

The lads introduced themselves and their pilot, Brown by name. Commander Hewlett also introduced his pilot as Brice.

"Have you any idea where we are?" asked Frank of Commander Hewlett.

"I am sure we cannot be far from Hamburg," was the reply. "We have covered considerable distance inland. The best thing to do, as I see it, is to try and hide these machines until we can get enough petrol to carry us back to the English coast. If that time ever comes we can make a dash for it. The 'planes are of no use to us without it."

The airplanes were quickly dragged into the woods, where they were well covered with bows and tree limbs. Stepping back the British surveyed their work.

"I don't believe anyone would see them unless he were looking for them," said Jack.

"No," replied Commander Hewlett. "I guess they are safe enough."

"The question is what to do now," said Frank.

"I have an idea," said Jack.

"What is it?" asked Commander Hewlett and Frank in a single voice.

"Well," said Jack, "the commander says we cannot be far from Hamburg. "Why can't we go to Hamburg and look around a bit. We may learn something of advantage."

"With these uniforms?" said Frank.

"True, I forgot," was the lad's reply.

"Still," said Hewlett, "I believe it can be done. Certainly we should be able to scrape up some other clothes. Now I have a plan. There are five of us here. You and I," he laid his hand on Jack's

shoulder, "will venture forth, leaving the others here. If we can find a farmhouse, or come upon any pedestrians, we shall insist that they change clothes with us. Then we can pick up three other suits some place, and return here. What do you say?"

"Suits me all right," replied Jack briefly.

"Good! Then we may as well start at once," whereupon Jack and Commander Hewlett fared forth in search of clothes.

Frank and the two British air pilots crept into the shelter of the trees, where they were to remain for twenty-four hours, unless their companions had returned before that time.

Now while the five Englishmen are in the heart of the enemy's country, seeking a means to penetrate even further, what of the British fleet on its way back to the coast of England?

While part of one of the German air fleets pursued the two escaping British 'planes, the remainder turned their attention to the British cruisers. Five of the British aircraft had already returned and been picked up by the cruisers, and the commander was loath to go without the two other machines.

Therefore, in spite of the attacks of the German air fleet, he retained his position for two hours more, replying to the fire of the enemy with his special airplane guns, and evading attack after

attack by German submarines by quick maneuvering.

But after two hours had elapsed without a sight of the two missing machines the British commander gave the word for the retreat. Slowly the four cruisers got under way, and slowly they made their way out of danger, passing close to the island of Helgoland, from which broke out the big German defense guns. Then, turning westward, they gathered speed and dashed for home.

Aboard the *Northumberland*, now that the fighting was over, Lord Hastings paced the deck bemoaning the loss of his two officers.

"I knew I should not have let them go," he told himself; "but I could refuse them nothing. They went into danger once too often. I shall never see them again!" Nor did the commander of the *Northumberland* regain his composure even when the British fleet had returned to the coast of England and safety.

Meanwhile Jack and Commander Hewlett made their way slowly through the woods, in search of someone or something that would mean a change of clothes. At length they came upon a house.

"Here," said Commander Hewlett, "is where we shall have to act quickly. One sight of our uniforms would spoil everything."

"Right," acquiesced Jack. "Still, I doubt if we

shall have much trouble, for people in this neighborhood hardly would expect an enemy to be near."

"Still it behooves us to be careful," was the reply. "I don't wish to be shot, or spend my remaining days in a German prison."

"Nor I," Jack agreed.

Slowly they approached the house and peered in one of the windows. In the lighted room beyond they could make out the form of an old man and woman.

"We don't want to hurt 'em," said Jack.

"No," was Commander Hewlett's reply. "We'll sneak in quietly and cover them with our guns. That will prevent a struggle."

Jack laid his hand on the doorknob. It turned, and the door moved beneath his hand without a sound. Silently the two British officers entered the house, and moved toward the room where the old couple sat, reading.

With drawn revolver Jack stepped inside.

"Throw up your hands!" he commanded.

His words were seconded by Commander Hewlett, who followed close upon his heels.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## A HUNT FOR CLOTHING.

THE old German and his wife leaped quickly to their feet and turned upon the two in the doorway with amazement written large upon their faces.

"Hands up! Quick!" cried Jack again.

Slowly the hands of the old couple went above their heads.

"Don't kill us!" quavered the old lady.

"If you won't kill us," said the old man in a shaky voice, "we will give up all our money. I'll get it for you."

Jack lowered his revolver.

"Have no fear," he said quietly. "We do not seek to do you harm. We are English officers, and——"

"English officers!" exclaimed the old man in surprise. "Then what are you doing here?"

Jack took the time to explain, and then added:

"We want clothes. Five suits of clothing we must have immediately."

The old man shook his head.

"I haven't five," he said, "but I can let you have



two, I think. They are my son's, who is away at the front."

Jack signified that two would do, and the old German led the way upstairs, where, from a closet, he drew forth two well-used and dusty suits of a dark texture.

"These will do excellently," said Jack.

He passed one to Commander Hewlett.

"Guess we might as well get into them at once," said the commander. "Do you stay here and guard these old people while I go in the next room and change. Then I shall stand guard while you don your new clothes."

The commander disappeared in the next room, but soon reappeared garbed in his civilian clothes. Jack also made a quick change, and the two left the house, thanking the old German for the garments.

"He'll probably raise the alarm as soon as we are out of sight," said Jack, "so we had better hustle."

"You are right," was the reply; "but if we can procure three more suits as easily as we did these, we shall be all right."

Leaving the road, they took to the woods, keeping just far enough in among the trees to be hidden from the view of anyone passing along the highway.

For half an hour they strode along in silence, without incident. Then both stopped suddenly in

their tracks. They had heard the sound of approaching footsteps.

They drew closer to the road and threw themselves upon the ground.

A few moments later two men hove into sight, talking loudly and boisterously.

"Intoxicated," said Commander Hewlett significantly. "We ought not to have much trouble here."

When the men were close upon them, the two Britons suddenly stepped into the road and confronted them.

"Hands up!" commanded Jack, covering first one and then the other with his revolver.

The men stopped in their tracks and their hands went high above their heads.

"What's the matter?" demanded one unsteadily. "Our money or our lives, eh? Is that it?"

"No," replied Jack. "It's your clothes or your lives this time."

"Clothes!" exclaimed one. "You've got clothes of your own. What do you want with ours?"

"Well," said Commander Hewlett quietly, "we need your clothes and that's all there is about it."

"But it's cold here," protested one of the men.

"That," said Jack quietly, "is not our fault. If you will live in such a country you must put up with the climate."

"Come now," said the commander, "you have

delayed long enough. "Off with your clothes, and off with them quickly."

His revolver was in his hand, and he now drew a bead upon the German nearest him.

"If this is a joke," said one of the Germans beginning to disrobe, "it's a poor one."

"It's no joke," replied Jack, "as you will find out if you don't hurry."

The first man, having divested himself of his clothes and having passed coat, trousers, vest and hat to Jack, stood shivering in his under garments. The second man also disrobed and passed his clothing to Commander Hewlett.

"We thank you kindly," said Jack, with a slight bow.

With this the two Britons hastened down the road, leaving their victims staring helplessly after them and shivering in the frigid atmosphere.

"Well, we only need one more now," said Jack.

He stopped, and spreading the confiscated clothing on the ground, rolled it up. Commander Hewlett followed his example with the other suit.

"I guess we'll get the other one all right," he made answer as they continued their way along the road.

It was now after midnight, and there seemed little likelihood that they would encounter another wayfarer. But, after half an hour's walk, they did.

This man was a German soldier. He lay sleeping alongside the road. The two bent over him.

"Now what do you suppose he is doing here?" asked Jack.

"It's too deep for me," was Commander Hewlett's reply. "However, it is lucky for us that we found him."

Jack aroused the slumberer by the simple process of stirring him with the toe of his boot.

"What is it?" came the sleepy query.

"Get up and give us your clothes," replied Jack.

The German soldier sat up. He was fully awake in an instant.

"You want my clothes?" he demanded.

"Yes," replied Jack briefly.

The German protested.

"What do you want with them?" he demanded, eyeing the revolver aimed at him.

"That," replied Jack calmly, "is our business. Take them off."

Again the German protested, as he slowly arose to his feet.

"It's cold here."

"We've heard that before," said Commander Hewlett. "Hurry!"

Jack shoved his revolver under the man's very nose and the German delayed no longer. Quickly he stripped himself of his outer garments and passed

them to Commander Hewlett, who rolled them up with the other suit.

"Now," said the latter to Jack, "we might as well get back. The sooner we return the better."

Leaving the German soldier muttering imprecations upon them, they turned and rapidly retraced their steps. For an hour they walked along without incident, and then Jack suddenly halted and grasped his companion by the arm.

"What is that?" he asked, pointing along the road.

At first he saw nothing. Then he made out a small fire burning on one side of the road, with two strange figures dancing madly about it. The commander broke into a loud laugh.

"That," he said, "or I should say, those, are the two wayfarers whom we relieved of their outer garments some time ago. From their antics, I should say that they are trying their best to keep warm."

Jack also broke into a laugh, which became so loud as he drew nearer the fire, that it attracted the attention of one of the men who was dancing about. For a moment he halted in his grotesque march around the blaze; then he dashed madly down the road, calling over his shoulder to his companion:

"Quick Hans! They have come back after the rest of our clothes!"

The second dancer took one long look at the

approaching figures of Jack and Commander Hewlett and followed wildly after the first, leaving the two British officers to laugh long and loudly as they continued their journey.

Another hour of rapid walking brought them to the spot where they had left their companions, and as they halted, Frank's head emerged from among the trees.

"I just wanted to be sure it was you," he said, as he arose and stepped forward. "We had unexpected callers a little while ago; but they didn't stop. Funniest thing I have seen for a long while. They didn't seem to have any clothes on."

"They didn't have many," replied Jack with a grin. "Here's some of 'em here."

He tossed his bundle to his friend. Frank looked at him in surprise.

"You see," Jack hastened to explain, "we took their outer garments away from them. They were running because they thought we wanted the rest. I hope the exercise helped them to keep warm."

"Well," said Frank, "they didn't stop to visit with us. It was a case of here they come and there they go. It looked like they wanted to get some place in an awful hurry."

The two air-pilots now came from among the trees and hastily donned the garments Commander Hewlett tossed to them, one of which was the Ger-

man uniform. Frank hastily changed his clothes, and all uniforms were then hidden in the woods.

"Well," said Frank, "I guess we might as well remain here until morning and try to get a little rest."

All lay down, and in spite of the severe cold, were soon fast asleep.

How long they slept they did not know, but they were aroused by the sounds of galloping along the road. All were awake in an instant, and with drawn revolvers, peered out from among the trees, taking care, however, to remain out of sight themselves.

Down the road came a body of German cavalry, spurring rapidly forward. They passed in a cloud of dust.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Frank, "do you suppose they are looking for us?"

"I hardly think so," was Commander Hewlett's reply. "They could scarcely know of our presence yet."

"However," said Jack, "the sooner we get away from here the better, if you ask me."

"Right you are," said the commander. "We may as well be moving."

The sun was just appearing over the horizon as the little party set out in a direction that they felt would eventually land them in the German city of Hamburg.

All morning they continued along the road with-



out coming upon a human being. They passed several houses in the distance, but these they avoided. Now, however, they grew hungry, and Frank said:

"I'm almost famished. I guess we had better tackle the next house for something to eat."

"A good idea," replied Commander Hewlett. "We'll do it."

Half an hour's walking and they came upon another house, setting somewhat closer to the road than had others they had passed. The little party approached and Frank knocked on the door. A man, large in stature, swarthy of skin, and loud of voice answered the knock.

"What is it?" he bellowed, holding the door slightly ajar.

"We would like some food," replied Jack, who was in advance of the others.

"Well, you can't get it here," was the loud reply, and the man attempted to close the door in the lad's face.

But Jack was too quick for him. He put his foot in the door and thus prevented its closing.

"Nevertheless," he said quietly, "we shall eat here. You will see that food is prepared for us immediately."

He put his shoulder to the door and pushed hard. The door gave way and the man on the other side was sent hurtling back across the hall. Jack was inside in a moment, his friends right behind him.

The German's hand flew to his pocket, but again Jack was too quick for him.

"None of that!" he said sternly.

The German's hand dropped to his side, for the barrel of Jack's automatic was but a few inches from his forehead, and the hand that held it was steady.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## DISCOVERED.

THE hostile tone of the German changed in an instant.

"Follow me," he said. "You shall have food at once."

He led the way to a small dining-room in the rear of the house, where the five Englishmen sat down. The German left the room, saying he would have his wife prepare the meal immediately.

For fifteen minutes the Englishmen waited patiently for his return, but at the expiration of that time Jack grew restless.

"Wonder why he doesn't hurry?" he said.

There was no satisfactory answer to this question, and finally Jack arose, remarking that he "would hurry him up a bit."

There was a brief silence after Jack left the room, and then from without came the sound of voices raised in anger, followed by the sound of a struggle and then a revolver shot.

Quickly Frank, Commander Hewlett and the two British pilots leaped to their feet and dashed from the room. Through the kitchen they went and out

into the rear of the house. There, struggling with three men, was Jack.

His revolver was still clutched in his hand, but his arm, grasped by the biggest of the three men, was extended high in the air, and he was unable to bring his weapon to bear. Even as his companions dashed from the house, however, Jack shook off one of his assailants with a quick kick, and at the same moment freed his arm by a sudden jerk.

But as he attempted to bring the revolver to bear, the three closed in on him again. Frank sprang forward with Commander Hewlett close at his heels. Gripping his revolver by the barrel Frank brought it down with terrific force on the head of the man that again clutched Jack's arm. The German reeled and fell to the ground.

The other two, taken by surprise by the unexpected arrival of reënforcements, gave back; but Frank was after them in an instant. His revolver butt found the head of a second man, who also fell. The third grappled with him to avoid being struck down.

The man was considerably larger and stronger than Frank, and bore the lad backward to the ground and fell on him. In falling Frank dropped his revolver and the German pounced upon it in an instant. Even as he would have fired it point-

blank in the lad's face, however, Jack, realizing his friend's peril, hurled himself upon the foe.

There was a sharp flash, but the bullet missed Frank's face by the fraction of an inch and was imbedded in the hard ground. Before the man could fire again Jack, with his left hand, jerked him to his feet, and with his right fist, planted a stunning blow squarely in his face.

The fight was over without Commander Hewlett or the two pilots having struck a blow.

Even while Jack was getting his breath the big German stirred. Consciousness was returning. Presently he sat up and looked around. The force of Frank's blow, while it had stunned him, had not even broken his scalp, so that he was little the worse for wear.

Jack walked over to him as he sat up.

"Now," he said quietly, "perhaps you will get us something to eat."

The German arose without a word and reëntered the kitchen, where he at once set about preparing food. Jack stood over him and superintended the job.

Having satisfied their appetites, the British rose to go. But as Frank stepped from the house and cast his eyes along the road, he quickly stepped back inside and closed the door.

"What's the matter?" asked Commander Hewlett.

"Troop of Uhlans coming down the road," re-

plied the lad quietly. "We shall have to act quickly. Bind those men on the outside and throw them into the cellar."

This was done with great haste, but the Germans, having already felt the weight of the lads' might, did not protest. Gags were stuffed in their mouths to prevent an outcry, and they were bundled below without ceremony.

Quickly now, at Frank's suggestion, the British once more took their places around the little table, their appearance indicating that they were just completing a meal.

"Of course the Germans may not stop here, but it is best to be prepared," said Frank.

"They would hardly take us for English at any rate," said Jack. "I can't see the sense of all this. I don't believe we would have been challenged if we had gone right along."

"Perhaps not; but the Germans here would have sent up an outcry."

"They don't know we are English."

"Still, they would have said something about the way we treated them, and the Germans would probably have ridden after us and demanded an explanation."

"I guess you are right, after all," Jack agreed.

Suddenly there came a loud knock at the front door.

"They have stopped all right," said Frank calmly. "We'll have to use our wits."

He left the table and went to the door. A tall German officer, booted and spurred, strode in, and close at his heels two subordinate officers.

"We want food," he said in a harsh voice.

"We have just finished our meal," replied Frank in perfect German, "but if you will follow me I have no doubt that I can find something to appease your appetites."

Without another word the officers followed the lad to the dining-room. Here they started in surprise at the sight of the other four men, one apparently a German soldier; but they said nothing.

Frank hastened into the kitchen, where he set about preparing what food he could lay his hands upon. He found some cold meat and bread, and, boiling some coffee, he placed these before the Germans.

The other British, in the meantime, had relinquished their seats at table to the Germans, for all were fully aware of what would happen should apparent German peasants attempt to remain seated in the presence of the German officers.

The Germans finished their meal, and then sat back in their chairs.

"I was afraid this would happen," muttered Frank to himself, for he realized that the officer was about to question them.



"Whose home is this?" he demanded.

"Mine," replied Frank quietly.

"Yours?"

"Yes, my mother died recently, leaving me in sole possession. I would be with the army, but that I was allowed leave to come home."

"Ah! then you are a soldier?"

"Yes, sir; or rather I am attached to the air fleet. I came to Altona by the air, with a brother officer; but from there I came afoot."

"What; you are an officer?"

"Yes, sir; rank of lieutenant, sir."

"Then why are you not in uniform?" demanded the German officer.

"I had but one when I reached Altona, sir, and that I unfortunately tore. I came home while it was being repaired; and as I have not gone back after it, I am wearing civilian clothes."

"And you return when?"

"To-morrow, sir."

"Good!"

Apparently satisfied with his questioning the German turned to Jack. Now Jack's German was every whit as perfect as was Frank's, and, making up a plausible story as he progressed, Jack also acquitted himself with credit.

Commander Hewlett also gave a good account of himself. He had spent many years in Berlin and his German was flawless.

But now the German turned to one of the British air-pilots with a question. This man had never been in Germany in his life and knew not a word of the German tongue. He realized that something was expected of him, and he replied with the single German word he knew, and he uttered it without an accent:

*"Nein!"*

The German officer turned to the other air-pilot, the one attired in a German uniform.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

Now this man could speak a little German, and he evidently believed he could pass muster. In halting and broken German, with a strong British accent, he replied:

"I came to visit my friend."

The German officer lifted his eyebrows in surprise. The Briton thought he had done well, but neither Frank, Jack nor Commander Hewlett was deceived.

"And are you a German?" asked the officer softly.

"Yah!"

The German officer leaned across the table, and, pointing his finger at the Englishman, said quietly:

"You lie! You are English!"

The three British officers, who had been prepared for this, leaped quickly to their feet and their revolvers covered the Germans before they could so much as make a move.

"Now," said Jack calmly to the German captain, as he motioned him to get to his feet, "you will walk to the door before me and command your men to march to Altona without you, leaving a corporal in charge if necessary."

For a moment it looked as though the officer would refuse, but the cold muzzle of the lad's revolver against the back of his neck caused him to move on. He did not wish to be killed in cold blood, as he felt he would be if he refused to obey.

With Jack close behind him, he went to the door and called out:

"Corporal Steinz!"

"Sir!" and a man dismounted and came toward him.

Jack kept well out of sight of the corporal, but kept his revolver close to the German commander's head.

"You will move to Altona immediately," instructed the commander. "We shall remain here until night."

"Very well, sir," replied the corporal, and moved away.

Jack kept the commander at the door until the troop moved off down the road. Then he returned to the dining-room with his prisoner.

The other German officers still sat in their chairs. They had not moved. Jack allowed the German

commander to sit down again, and then took a seat himself.

"Now," said Jack to his friends, "we will talk over what is best to be done. Certainly, we haven't much time, for if these officers fail to appear in Altona to-night a search is sure to be instituted."

"Let's tie 'em up and put 'em down the cellar with the others," suggested Frank. "That's the easiest way to get rid of them."

The German commander spoke.

"Will you accept our paroles to remain here until such a time as you may set?" he asked courteously.

Jack, Frank and Commander Hewlett considered this. Then Jack said:

"Under ordinary circumstances we would be glad to do so. This, however, is an extraordinary case, and we cannot afford to take the chance."

"Sir!" exclaimed the German commander. "Do you doubt the word of a German gentleman?"

Jack paid no heed to this outburst, but continued calmly.

"There is no need for you to get riled about it. We have decided that we shall tie and gag you and put you in the cellar. Some of your men will find you to-night, I presume."

The German officer drew himself up straight in his chair.

"You shall suffer for this outrage!" he exclaimed. "Sooner or later you will be captured, and when

you are, I shall make it my business to see that you meet a fitting punishment!"

"Thanks," said Jack laconically. "Now, Frank, let's get to work."

The other four Britons now approached the prisoners. From a little closet Frank produced a coil of rope."

"Might as well take the commander first," he said.

He made a noose in the rope and approached to slip it over his head.

At that instant Jack was attracted by a noise behind him. He whirled about. In the doorway stood the big German, who had been tied up in the cellar, and behind him were his two companions!

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE FIGHT IN THE HOUSE.

JACK started back in surprise and let out a cry of warning. In some unaccountable manner the imprisoned Germans had slipped their bonds, and having armed themselves with knives and other available weapons, had stealthily approached their recent captors.

At Jack's cry of warning, the Englishmen straightened up—they had been engaged in the act of binding the German officers—and turned to meet their new foes.

Frank's revolver cracked, but he had fired hurriedly and his aim was poor. One of the Germans in the doorway staggered back, but he did not fall, and came forward with his companions.

In their eagerness to ward off the attack of this new enemy, the British had relaxed their guard over the German officers. These had not been disarmed by their captors, and their swords and revolvers now flashed out.

"Attack them from behind!" cried the German commander.

With his two subordinate officers he rushed forward.

Leaving Jack and Commander Hewlett to attend to the three Germans who advanced through the doorway, Frank and the two British air-pilots turned to meet the enemy in their rear. The German commander fired point-blank at Frank, but the latter stepped quickly aside at the moment the officer pressed the trigger, and emerged out of the smoke unscathed.

Came a cry from Jack.

"Through the door and scatter throughout the house!"

Diving suddenly to the floor, Frank hurled himself forward and caught at the legs of the German officers. His ruse was successful, and the Germans went down in a tangled heap.

Before they could extricate themselves, Frank had regained his feet, and, followed by the two pilots, hurled himself upon the foes in front. This impetus, added to the weight of Jack and Commander Hewlett, had its effect. The Germans parted, and the English dashed through the door.

By this time the German officers were on their feet again and several revolver shots resounded through the house. One chipped the wood from the door close to the head of one of the Englishmen as he turned into the hall. The splinters flew about him, but he was not injured.



The room next the dining-room was a bedroom. Into this dashed Frank, followed by the two pilots. Jack and Commander Hewlett, somewhat in advance of the rest, had darted up the steps a few feet ahead, and were safe around the first landing.

Frank took his position just inside the door of the bedroom, both of his automatics guarding this entrance. Leaving Commander Hewlett to guard the narrow approach to the stairs, Jack dashed to the second floor and to the rear of the house, where, he felt sure, there was a second stairway.

He was none too soon, for even as he drew close he heard the sound of rapidly ascending footsteps. Without taking time to aim he fired as he dashed forward. There was a second of silence, then the sound of footsteps descending the stairs three at a time.

Frank, guarding the door of the bedroom, now issued a command to the two pilots.

"Out of the window, quick! and guard the rear door! Let no one out!"

The men leaped to obey this order, and there was a sound of smashing glass as they jumped through, not even taking the time to raise the sash. They landed on their feet like cats and dashed toward the rear door.

As they came close a form suddenly appeared in

the doorway. The first pilot took a snap shot, and the figure leaped back into the house.

In the rear of the house was a little shed, and the pilots leaped to shelter behind it. A shot rang out, as they made for the shelter, but they reached it uninjured.

All means of egress for the Germans were now barred. They had the freedom of the kitchen and of the dining-room, but that was all. To advance through the lower hall meant to run the risk of being shot down by either Frank or Commander Hewlett. There was no means of escape by ascending the stairs in the rear, for Jack was on guard there; and to attempt to leave by the back door was to invite almost certain death, for the two British air-pilots covered the back door.

The house became suddenly still. Frank put one revolver back in his pocket while he glanced at his watch. It was after 2 o'clock.

He called out to Commander Hewlett:

"They will try to wait us out and keep us here until help of some kind arrives. We shall have to act quickly."

"What can we do?" came back in the commander's voice.

"I don't know—yet," said Frank. "Give me a few minutes. I may hit upon a plan."

Still guarding the door the lad considered the situation; and suddenly a plan came to him.

"Get ready to shoot the first head that appears in the hall," he called guardedly, feeling sure he would not be heard overhead, and then he cried in a loud voice: "I am going to make a dash for the stairs!"

Commander Hewlett perceived the ruse on the instant. The Germans, having heard only the latter part of the boy's words, prepared to shoot him down as he dashed toward the steps.

"Here I come!" shouted Frank, and in his tracks made a sound as if he were running.

A German head, over the top of a revolver, was poked through the dining-room door. Instantly Commander Hewlett fired. He was rewarded by a scream, and one German, struck by the unerring bullet, toppled to the floor in the hall.

"I got him!" cried the commander exultantly.

"Good for you!" shouted Frank.

The lad realized that the Germans would not be caught the same way again, and he set his mind to figuring out some other ruse. Then he took his cap from his head, and poked it slowly through the door, striking the wall with his revolver butt to attract the attention of the Germans.

A revolver flashed down the hall. Frank, with a cry, toppled over into the hall. Came a cry from Commander Hewlett:

"I'll get you for that!" and, throwing caution to the winds, the commander dashed from his place of concealment, coming down the steps two at a time.

Hearing this, the Germans poked their heads out to investigate, and, perceiving but one enemy coming toward them, the other lying upon the floor, two German officers, with revolvers aimed, stepped into the hall to meet him.

Very calmly, and taking deliberate aim, Frank, from his position on the floor, promptly shot them down with his automatic. Attracted by the sound of their fall, the German commander dashed into the hall to make out the cause of it. Commander Hewlett accounted for him with a single bullet.

Four of the enemy had been placed *hors de combat*.

Frank now arose calmly to his feet and stepped back into the bedroom, where Commander Hewlett followed him.

"I thought you were dead!" he exclaimed. "I made sure that German bullet had found its mark."

"No," said Frank quietly, "I simply tumbled out there so as to get a good line on them."

"Well, your ruse was a decided success," replied the commander admiringly.

The two remaining Germans were still in the dining-room. Emerging again into the hall, Frank called upon them to surrender.

"Never!" came the reply.

"Well," said Frank, "we can't leave while they are guarding the exit from the house. We'll have to dislodge them."

"But how?" asked Commander Hewlett.

"You stand guard here," said the lad, "and shoot the first one who sticks his head out. I think I can fix it."

He lowered himself through the already broken window. Calling to the pilots, who were still behind the shed in the rear of the house, he ordered one to remain on guard at the door and the other to draw near the dining-room window.

This order was obeyed, and Frank also approached the window of the dining-room from his side. There, at a safe distance, he brought one of his revolvers to bear upon the window, and emptied the magazine. From his side of the window the pilot did the same.

Came a terrible scream from inside the house, and even from where he stood, Frank saw one of the remaining Germans spring to his feet, spin about and topple over on to the table.

"Only one left," he said calmly.

A moment later there came the sound of another shot from the place where Jack stood on guard and the latter's voice exclaimed:

"I got one of 'em!"

Standing guard as he had at the top of the rear flight of steps, Jack could not tell how matters had progressed in other parts of the house. He had heard the sound of shots, but he had feared to leave his post.

When Frank heard Jack cry out he calmly restored his weapons to his pockets and reentered the house. Commander Hewlett was still on guard in the bedroom.

"It's all over!" said Frank quietly.

"Well, I'm not sorry," was the reply. "It was a pretty ticklish situation, if you ask me."

Frank raised his voice and called to Jack:

"You can come down now, old man! It's all over!"

In great surprise Jack descended the steps.

"I got one of 'em," he repeated. "But how on earth did you manage to dispose of the others?"

His eyes fell upon the four sprawling figures just outside the dining-room.

"Looks like some of your work," he said, looking at Frank.

"Commander Hewlett took two of 'em," he replied quietly. "The others were mine."

"And where is the other?"

"Oh, Brown got him through the window," replied Frank.

"Well," said Jack, "I guess it would be a good idea for us to make ourselves scarce around here."

"You bet," said Frank, "and the sooner the better."

They called Brown and Brice, and, walking rapidly, they started once more on the road to the German city of Hamburg.

## CHAPTER XX.

## HAMBURG.

"HAMBURG," explained Commander Hewlett, as they walked along, "is the principal seaport of the German empire. In times of peace it is the center of commerce and foreign trade."

"How large a city is it?" asked Frank.

"The latest census gives it a population of something near a million."

"But," said Jack, "it is not on the sea."

"No," was the reply, "it is on the Elbe river—but on the opposite side from Cuxhaven—and about sixty miles to the southeast."

"If it is no farther than that we should reach there before long," said Frank.

"Well," said Jack, "the sooner we get there and are able to lose ourselves in the city the better. When the German commander fails to get to Altona to-night there will be a search; and when they find out what transpired in the house we have just left, the Germans will keep a sharp lookout for all suspicious-looking strangers."

"Therefore," said Commander Hewlett, "it behooves us to reach Hamburg with all possible haste."



Night fell and still the little party continued along the road, traveling at top speed. Now they began to pass bodies of German troops, and at last, rounding a sharp turn in the road, they beheld, in the distance, the lights of a large city.

"Hamburg!" said Commander Hewlett briefly.

The five Englishmen unconsciously quickened their steps and eventually entered the town. The streets were crowded, and the three men and two boys mingled boldly with the throng.

Apparently, there was no cause for uneasiness on their part. No attention was paid to them, as they made their way along the streets; and finally Jack suggested that they had better get something to eat. Accordingly they entered a small restaurant, which they happened to be passing at that moment.

A waiter ushered them to a table back in a corner of the room and departed with their orders. While he was gone a second waiter appeared, followed by two German officers. These he seated at a table close by. When he had departed one of the officers leaned toward the other and said in a low voice, but still loud enough for Jack to catch:

"Are you sure this is the place?"

"Sure," was the reply. He drew out his watch and looked at it. "Nine o'clock," he said. "Half an hour yet."

"It's better to be early than late," said the first officer.

"Now," said Jack curiously, "I wonder what this is all about?"

In low tones he repeated to his friends the conversation he had overheard.

"Something up, I guess," replied Frank. "We'll wait and see."

The five accordingly killed as much time as possible over their meal. Although Jack listened attentively, he was unable to catch any more of the German officers' conversation.

But now, one of the officers having again looked at his watch, closed it with a snap.

"Nine o'clock!" he said, and leaned back in his chair.

Jack was thrilled with an air of expectancy, as were the others of the Englishmen.

The words had hardly left the German officer's mouth when a solitary figure entered the room and strode quickly to a table between the German officers and the five Englishmen. Jack took one look at him, and then whispered to his friends:

"By Jove! He's no German!"

"Looks more like an Englishman," Frank whispered back.

"An American! That's what he is!" exclaimed Commander Hewlett.

"Do you think so?" whispered Frank eagerly.

"I feel positive of it."

Looking beyond the subject of this conversation,

Jack saw that the German officers eyed the man angrily. One made a move as if to rise, but was stayed by the hand of the other. The stranger, with his back toward the German officers, was seemingly unaware of the interest being manifested in him by the Germans, although he had seen them as he took his seat.

Calmly he gave his order to the waiter, and then sat back in his chair with the utmost nonchalance.

The five Englishmen went on with their meal.

As the waiter was serving the stranger, a young and becomingly gowned woman entered the room. She glanced about, as though somewhat embarrassed, as a waiter escorted her toward the far end of the room. The stranger, raising his eyes unconcernedly, caught sight of her, and arose to his feet with an exclamation:

"Why, Miss Ross!"—taking several steps after her—"where did you come from?"

The girl—for she was nothing more—turned, then smiled brightly at the man.

"Why, Mr. Smith," she said, "who would have thought of meeting you here? It is such a relief to meet someone you know!"

She accepted his invitation to dine with him, and Mr. Smith ordered the waiter to make a place for two. This was done, and the two fell into a commonplace conversation.

Jack was the closest of his party to the couple,

but his back was turned to them and he could see nothing. Frank, who sat directly across the table from Jack, however, suddenly saw the man's hand go beneath the table. Likewise he saw the woman's hand advance to meet it, and, while he was not positive, he felt sure that he saw a paper change hands.

But before the girl could hide the paper, if such it were, the German officers were on their feet and advanced upon them. They leaped up quickly and sent their chairs back with vicious kicks.

Jack, attracted by the noise, turned suddenly, just in time to see something white flutter from the girl's hand to the floor. She had realized the danger in an instant, and had let the paper fall.

Jack's mind worked quickly. The paper had fallen almost at his feet. He stretched forth one foot and drew it closer to him. Then, dropping his napkin, he stooped down and picked it up—and the paper as well. Then, being sure that he was not observed by the Germans, he stuffed the paper into his pocket.

The girl was quick to notice his action, and started in alarm. Jack reassured her with a word.

"Have no fear!" he whispered in English.

The girl inclined her head in answer to his words, for she did not wish to draw suspicion to the lad, particularly as he now had the paper she had dropped.

As the German officers approached the table, Miss

Ross and Mr. Smith eyed them with well-simulated surprise.

"Mr. Smith," said one of the Germans sternly, "you will please give me whatever documents you have for this lady."

"Documents!" exclaimed Smith.

"Come, no foolishness," was the angry reply. "You have been discovered!"

"Discovered!" ejaculated Smith. "What do you mean? Surely there is no harm in Miss Ross dining with me?"

The German officer banged a hand heavily on the table.

"I want that map!" he exclaimed vehemently; "the map you stole from my desk to-day!"

"Map I stole?" exclaimed Smith. "I haven't any map."

"Will you submit to a search or shall I have to use force?" asked the German.

"I'll submit with pleasure," was the reply.

The German officer was taken somewhat aback.

"Then you have given it to Miss Ross," he said.

Smith was on his feet in an instant.

"See here," he exclaimed, "this is about enough of this foolishness. Do you accuse Miss Ross and me of being thieves?"

"Worse," was the grim response. "You are British spies!"

Smith broke into a loud laugh.

"Spies!" he repeated. "We are American citizens, and you know it. You will interfere with us at your peril!"

"You are American citizens, I have no doubt of that," was the reply; "but I know more about you than you think."

He gave a sign to the second officer, who went to the door of the restaurant, returning a moment later followed by two soldiers. One of these took Smith by the shoulder, and the other laid rude hands on the girl, jerking her to her feet.

This was too much for Frank, who had been an interested listener to the conversation. He jumped to his feet, walked quickly around and confronted the German officer.

"What do you mean by allowing a lady to be treated like that?" he demanded angrily.

"What business is it of yours?" shot back the officer.

"Well, I have made it my business," replied the lad. "I can't stand by and see a lady insulted."

In vain did Jack, by silent signals, try to quiet his friend. The latter never so much as glanced toward him.

"There goes that temper of his again," said Jack to himself. "Well, there is no help for it now."

He arose slowly to his feet. Commander Hewlett and the two pilots did the same. At this sign

of apparent reënforcements for Smith and the girl, the hand of the first officer dropped to his belt.

"Sit down," he commanded quietly. "These," indicating the man and the girl, "are British spies, and they are under arrest!"

"How do you know they are spies?" demanded Frank.

"I have proof," was the quiet response.

"Well, maybe they are," replied the lad, "but that doesn't alter the fact that one of them is a girl."

"You fool," cried the German officer, losing all patience, "you are only getting yourself in trouble. Unless you put aside this unwarranted chivalry and sit down at once, I shall be forced to order your arrest also."

"I suppose I am a spy, too?" sneered Frank.

"Well," said the officer, "maybe you are. You act like it." He turned to his men. "Arrest him," he said simply, as he half drew his revolver.

But Jack was too quick for him. With something like a sigh, Jack quickly drew his awn automatic, and covering the German officer, said quietly but sternly:

"None of that! Hands up, quick, all of you!"



## CHAPTER XXI.

## FUGITIVES.

THIS startling climax had come so suddenly that none, with the possible exception of Frank, was prepared for it.

But Commander Hewlett, although he did not know hardly what the trouble was about, was not the man to stand idly by while his friends bore the brunt of the trouble. With a quick command to the two pilots he also drew his revolver and stepped forward, covering the second German officer before the latter could draw.

The pilots, however, were not quick enough to prevent the quick action by the two German soldiers. Seeing their officers covered by revolvers in the hands of two strangers, they quickly dropped their rifles, and revolvers leaped into their hands. One fired pointblank at Frank.

The lad was never nearer death, for at that distance a miss would have been impossible; but Jack's keen eye, taking in everything about him, had perceived his chum's danger, and turning his weapon from the officer he fired at the first German soldier just as the latter pressed the trigger.

The soldier's bullet went whizzing past Frank's head, but the German, shot in the chest, toppled to the floor.

The German officer, immediately Jack had turned his revolver from him, quickly drew his own gun, and would have shot Jack down had it not been for the quick wit of Miss Ross, who, springing forward, unmindful of her own danger, struck up the hand that held the weapon.

Commander Hewlett still covered the second German officer. The other, his aim spoiled by Miss Ross, whirled upon the girl, and dealt her a blow with his fist. This was too much for Jack, who, forgetting that he held a revolver in his hand, leaped forward and struck the officer to the floor with a single blow of his left fist.

This placed two of the enemy beyond fighting, and the other two were covered by Frank, Commander Hewlett and the two pilots.

Mr. Smith now promptly took charge of the situation.

"Quick!" he exclaimed. "We must get away from here at once. That shot will have aroused every sleepy German soldier in the neighborhood, and we'll have a regiment on us before we know it. Follow me!"

He darted through the restaurant, closely followed by the others, Frank stopping for a bare second to relieve the Germans of their weapons.

Straight through the room dashed Mr. Smith, and now a wicked-looking automatic glinted in his hand.

Waiters, cashier and the proprietor, who stood near the door in an amazed group, gave way at the sight of him, diving hurriedly under tables and chairs. Outside the door Smith stopped to guard the exit until all had left; then, turning to his right, he dashed down the street, followed by the others.

For two blocks he ran, thence down a cross street, and stopped suddenly beside a large automobile.

"This is the one I came in," he explained briefly. "Climb in!"

Jack stood aside until Miss Ross had entered the machine, then climbed in after her. Commander Hewlett and the two pilots jumped into the tonneau, and Frank leaped into the front seat, where Smith already sat with his hand on the wheel.

At that moment, around the corner two blocks away, came a squad of German cavalry, followed by a shouting crowd of howling men and women. They dashed toward the machine, which stood facing them, ready for the clutch.

"No time to turn!" cried Smith, as he started the car forward with a sudden leap. "Duck down, everybody!"

Those in the rear of the car obeyed. Frank, however, sitting beside Smith, calmly drew his revolver.

"Duck!" cried Smith again, as the car lurched forward.

Frank paid no heed to this command, but sat upright, as did Smith at the wheel.

Straight toward the German horsemen and the howling mob the car sped. The Germans sought to bring their weapons to bear upon the speeding machine, but they did not have time. Then they attempted to draw their mounts out of the path of the machine, but the street was too narrow.

The car dashed in among them, hurling horsemen to right and left, and scattering the crowd beyond. It was through the throng in an instant. One volley rang out from the rear, and the bullets were imbedded in the rear of the car, but no one was injured.

There was no time for a second volley, for, as the car still dashed forward at terrific speed, Smith sent it lurching around the first corner with an unerring hand.

The car lurched like a ship in distress, and seemed in imminent danger of turning over. Straight upon the sidewalk it went with a bump, and then came down again safely.

From behind the German cavalry, having pulled itself together, dashed forward in pursuit.

But the large automobile was beyond the reach of those men. Five minutes later Smith slackened his pace.

"We'll have to go more slowly now," he said quietly, "or we shall have all the automobiles in the city on our track."

The five in the rear of the car, three men, a boy and a girl, extricated themselves from the tangled heap into which they had been thrown by the lurching of the car, and sat up.

"Say, this fellow Smith is quite a driver, isn't he?" said Jack.

The girl smiled at him in the darkness.

"He is," was her reply. "Only his name is no more Smith than yours. It is Nelson; and so is mine."

"Brother and sister?" asked Jack.

"Yes."

"Americans, aren't you?"

"On our mother's side. Our father is a British officer, now serving with the army on the continent. My brother is in the diplomatic service, and since the outbreak of the war I have been helping him. He has procured much valuable information. Because of my youth and sex I have been able to start this information into channels which eventually took it to England."

"A diplomatic agent?" questioned Jack. "I didn't know a diplomatic agent had such work to do. Do you mean a secret service agent?"

"Well, it's almost the same thing," replied the girl.

"Then," said Jack, "perhaps you know our commander, Lord Hastings. He has some connection with this work."

"I know him well," was the reply. "But if you are English, what are you doing in Hamburg?"

"This," said Jack, pointing to his companion, "is Flight Commander Hewlett, of the British sky fleet, and these," indicating the two men, "are air pilots. My friend in the front seat and myself are naval officers. My name is Templeton."

"But," said the girl, "what are you doing here?"

Jack related the story of their raid over Cuxhaven, and narrated the events which followed. When he had concluded he drew from his pocket the paper the girl had dropped in the restaurant and gave it to her.

"If we had been arrested and this found in our possession," said the girl, "we should have undoubtedly been put to death as spies."

"What I should like to know," said Jack, "is why, being brother and sister, it should be necessary for you to meet in a public place to transfer the document from one to the other?"

"I suppose it does seem strange to you," replied the girl, smiling. "The reason is this: We do not live in the same place. I am staying with the wife of one of the highest military officers in the city. Walter is employed as a clerk in the office of the military governor. We are not known to be re-

lated, and consequently do not recognize each other as such in public."

"But," said Jack, "why shouldn't he see you where you are living?"

"It would be too risky," was the reply, "for, should we even be suspected, it would be the end for both of us."

"And will you return home to-night?" asked the lad.

"No, I shall go to Walter's home, where you also may find safety. There he lives under his own name. I am sure that he will not remain longer in Hamburg, and when he leaves I leave also."

The automobile, which had continued along at a good pace during this conversation, now came to a halt, and Smith alighted. The others did likewise. Looking up the lads saw that they stood before a large and handsome residence.

"This," said Smith, with a gesture, "is where we live. We shall lie quiet here for a day or two and try to figure out some way to leave Hamburg. My usefulness here, and that of my sister, is over. We shall get back to England as soon as possible."

The two lads, Commander Hewlett and the pilots followed Smith and his sister into the house, where, after enjoying a short talk, they were shown to their rooms by Smith himself.

"Now," said the latter, "I am going to put my automobile in a place of safety, call a taxi and go down town again."



"But won't it be dangerous?" asked Frank.

"Perhaps; but it would be more dangerous not to. I must attempt to ascertain whether our identities have been discovered."

"May I go along?" asked the lad.

"Why, yes, I suppose so," was the reply.

"Then I'll go to," exclaimed Jack.

But Frank set his veto on this.

"You stay here and look after Miss Nelson," he said.

"A good idea," said Nelson, whom we shall hereafter call by his real name.

Jack protested, but to no avail.

Nelson and Frank left the house and climbed into the car once more. They rode slowly along for some minutes, and then, stopping in a secluded spot, Nelson leaped out, and in a moment had removed the license number of the car, substituting another which he had in his pocket.

"Always carry an extra license number for just such an emergency," he explained.

A little farther along the street they came to a garage, where they left the car. Then they started out afoot. After ten minutes' walk they hailed a passing taxi and climbed in.

"No use showing ourselves any more than we have to," explained Nelson. "Some one might recognize us, you know."

It was late now, but, in spite of this they drove

about the streets for more than an hour, going right by the restaurant where the trouble had occurred so recently, and passing the exact spot where the cavalry had fired upon the automobile.

The streets were still crowded, in spite of the lateness of the hour, and vehicle traffic was congested. Peering from the window of the cab, Frank suddenly started back. For, in a touring car that was passing at that moment he recognized the face of the German officer who had so recently ordered his arrest.

He realized in an instant that he had been recognized, for, with a quick command to the driver of his car, the officer had ordered that the taxi be pursued.

Frank cried out in alarm to Nelson. The latter was quick to recognize their danger, and he signaled the driver to turn out of the congested district and lose the pursuing machine.

"If we had an English driver," said Nelson, "we would be all right. But if this fellow ever suspected why we were being followed he would deliver us into the hands of the authorities at once."

The taxi was now upon the outskirts of the town, and Frank, looking back, saw that the pursuing machine was gradually closing up the distance.

As the lad looked back a revolver cracked and a bullet whistled overhead!

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE CHASE.

THE driver of the taxi brought his machine to a stop with a lurch. Evidently he had no mind to be shot at.

No sooner had it stopped, however, than Frank was out the door, and into the driver's seat. The latter attempted to fight him off, crying out :

“Spy !”

But Frank, having gained a foothold on the seat, was not to be hurled back. He grappled with the German, and by a dexterous move, threw the driver over backward into the street.

Then, under his firm hand, the taxi leaped forward again.

But the pursuing machine had gained upon them during this struggle, and was now close behind. Revolver shots broke the stillness of the night, and Nelson, from within the cab, cried :

“Quick ! Get away, or we'll have a flock of them upon us !”

Clear through the town and into the country beyond Frank drove the taxi ; but, try as he would, he could not shake off the pursuer.

Now Nelson had formed a plan, and, raising his voice, he commanded Frank to stop the machine.

The lad brought the taxi to a halt with a lurch, and at a second command turned it broadside across the road. The pursuing car was thus forced to stop or crash into the taxi.

It stopped; and even as it did so the officer raised his revolver and took a snap-shot at Nelson, who, through the window of the taxi, was exposed to his fire. Nelson had expected it and dodged back the very instant that the German pulled the trigger. The bullet flew harmlessly through the cab.

Before he could fire again, the Englishman raised up, and taking quick aim, fired. Straight and true sped the bullet, and found lodgment in the German's breast. He dropped his weapon and fell back in his seat.

"I got him!" said Nelson calmly.

Now, from back along the road, came the sound of other cars approaching. Realizing that the taxi could not outdistance them, Nelson flung open the door of the cab and leaped quickly to the ground. Frank followed him.

Straight toward the larger automobile they dashed, and before the chauffeur was fully aware of their intention, they were upon him. He struggled and fought gamely, but was soon overpowered.

With drawn revolver Frank climbed into the rear seat, while Nelson took the wheel. Skirting close

to the taxi that blocked the center of the road, the two were soon beyond it. Then Nelson hit up a tremendous gait.

But the pursuing cars, which had drawn even nearer while the two struggled with the chauffeur, were not to be shaken off thus easily. However, they were not gaining now.

As Frank looked back, he felt himself suddenly seized by a pair of arms. The lad had forgotten the presence of the wounded German officer in the car, who was now trying to hurl him over the side into the road.

Taken at a disadvantage, in spite of the fact that the German was severely wounded, the lad found himself in imminent danger of being thrown out. With one hand, however, he succeeded in clutching the German around the neck and clung tightly.

The officer freed a hand and dealt the lad a hard blow in the face. At the same moment Frank released his hold and returned the blow. The German, weakened by loss of blood, groaned, sank back, and lapsed into unconsciousness.

Nelson, with his eyes on the road ahead, had known nothing of the struggle in the rear seat. He was doing the driving. The fighting, should the pursuing machines approach close enough, must be done by Frank.

Coming suddenly upon a cross road Nelson sent the car around with a quick lurch. Frank lost his

balance and only saved himself from being thrown out by a quick clutch at the back of the front seat. Half a mile farther on, by another quick turn of the wheel, Nelson turned the car into another road, which led back toward the town.

The machine was a mile down the road before the first of the pursuing cars came into sight again. One long, black shape, with flashing headlights, was coming forward much faster than the rest, and Frank cried out as he perceived it was gaining.

"Can't help it!" cried Nelson. "I am getting the best I can out of her!"

Still the pursuing automobile gained; and at last it came close enough for its occupants to open fire with their revolvers. The darkness and the speed of the cars, however, made accurate shooting impossible, and neither Frank nor Nelson was touched.

Into the city the cars dashed once more and tore madly down the street. As they neared a cross street, there came a sudden "bang" from the car in which Nelson and Frank rode.

Nelson brought the car to a quick stop.

"Blow out!" he exclaimed, and leaped to the ground.

Frank followed him, and the two took to their heels.

Around corner after corner they dashed, the Germans following closely, firing with their revolvers when they caught a sight of the fugitives.

Suddenly Frank and his companion darted into a dark alley. At the end they brought up against a solid wall. Both stopped and listened in silence. The footsteps of their pursuers came nearer, then passed the mouth of the alley. Quickly the fugitives hurried from their retreat, and emerging unperceived, made their way back around the next corner, where they again broke into a run.

Twisting and doubling back along the streets, they at length felt certain they had shaken off their pursuers and slowed down to a walk.

"Whew!" exclaimed Nelson. "This is too strenuous for me!"

"I thought they had us when we were in that alley," said Frank.

"They'd have had us, all right, if they had thought of coming in," was the reply. "Still, I guess we could have picked off some of them. We were in the darkness, and they made good targets in the mouth of the alley."

"Well," said Frank, "what shall we do now?"

"Go home," was the reply. "I am tired out."

"So am I," declared Frank.

Feeling perfectly safe now, they walked boldly along the deserted streets. Frank looked at his watch.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "Do you know what time it is?"

"About one o'clock," was the reply.



"One!" ejaculated Frank; "it's after four!"

"Just that much more reason why we should turn in at once," said Nelson.

They made their way to the downtown section, where, after a search, they were at last fortunate to find a taxi. Into this they climbed wearily and were soon deposited before Nelson's home. As Nelson stooped to insert his key in the lock, Frank, chancing to glance back over his shoulder, saw a dim shadow flit suddenly out of sight behind a tree across the street.

The lad clutched his companion by the arm.

"We are watched!" he exclaimed.

Nelson looked up, his key still in his hand.

"What!" he exclaimed.

"We are watched!" repeated Frank. "There is a man hiding behind that tree over there," pointing.

"But surely they could not have followed us here!" exclaimed Nelson.

"Well, I don't know about that," said Frank, "but I am positive that man is watching us."

"Can it be that we have been discovered—that they have connected me with the so-called Smith?" muttered Nelson to himself.

"If you ask me," said Frank, "I should say that that is just what they have done."

"Well," said Nelson, "we can't leave that fellow across the street. Neither can we afford to shoot him, for that would be bound to betray us."

"What would you suggest?" asked Frank.

Nelson was silent for some moments before replying. Finally he said:

"We'll both walk toward that tree with our guns in our hands. Then, when he makes a break, we'll call upon him to halt. Realizing that we have the drop on him, he won't think we are afraid to fire. He'll probably halt."

Walking quickly down the steps the two approached the tree, one from either side. Suddenly the man peered from behind the tree. Perceiving his two enemies advancing on him, one from either side, he left his refuge and took to his heels.

"Halt or I fire!" cried Frank, dashing after the fleeing man, his revolver aimed squarely at him.

The man took one look over his shoulder, and then came to a stand.

"You've got me," he said quietly, and Frank laid a hand on his arm.

"Now," said Nelson, coming up, "I want to know what you were shadowing us for?"

"I wasn't shadowing you," was the reply.

"Well, then, what were you watching my house for?"

"That's my business," said the German quietly.

"You mean you won't tell me?"

"That's just what I mean."

"Well, I don't suppose it makes any difference. We'll just take you along in with us and tie you up

good and tight. Come on," this to Frank, who turned and followed Nelson up the steps again.

Nelson opened the door and stepped aside for Frank and their prisoner to enter. Then he went in and closed the door behind him.

"Go into the parlor," he instructed Frank, "first door on the right, there."

Frank did as ordered. Nelson followed, and soon had a light. Then, twisting the lace curtains into ropes, they proceeded to bind and gag their prisoner.

"Guess that will hold him," said Nelson, stepping back and surveying the captive. "Come to the dining-room and have a bite to eat."

Frank followed his host from the room. Through the library the two made their way, and then to the door of the dining room. Nelson flung the door open, and stood aside for Frank to enter. The lad put one foot through the door, and then drew back with a low cry of amazement.

A strange sight met his gaze.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## TRAPPED.

WHEN Nelson and Frank left the house, in spite of the lateness of the hour, Commander Hewlett, Jack and Miss Nelson did not retire immediately, but entered the dining-room, the girl announcing that she would prepare a light lunch. The two British pilots, however, elected not to wait for anything to eat, but to turn in at once, which they did.

Over the dainty little meal that the girl prepared the three talked much. Jack related the story of his experiences after joining the British navy, and Commander Hewlett told his adventures since the outbreak of the war. Miss Nelson—she now informed her companions that she would have them address her as Marion—also gave an account of her work in Hamburg, and of her earlier life, which she had spent in the United States, in the largest city in Virginia.

Consequently it was well after midnight when they pushed back their chairs, and arose from the table.

“I wonder what can be keeping Walter and your friend?” she said to her companions. “I expected

them long before this. I hope they haven't fallen into trouble of any kind."

"If they have, I'll bank on Frank to get out of it," said Jack, with a laugh. "He's about as resourceful a fellow as you would want to meet."

"Then they are two of a kind," smiled the girl. "I used to worry a lot about Walter, but he always turns up after a while. I don't worry like I used to."

"Then I guess we might as well all *turn in*," said Commander Hewlett, "feeling sure the missing ones will *turn up* all right."

The girl laid her hand on the knob of the dining-room door, and was about to open it, when a noise caused her to step back.

"What was that?" she asked.

"I didn't hear anything," replied Jack, in a low voice. "What did it sound like?"

"It sounded like something fell in the hall; or as though someone had bumped against something."

The three listened.

"You must have been mistaken," said Jack finally. "You are probably a bit nervous after our experience to-night."

"No, I am not nervous," said the girl, extending a steady hand. "See."

Her arm was perfectly rigid. There was no sign of nervousness there.

"I guess I must have been mistaken," said the girl after another pause.

Jack advanced and laid his hand on the door-knob. But even as he would have turned it, there was the sound of many footsteps in the hall.

The lad stepped back quickly, but the girl sprang forward, and turned the key in the door.

"We are discovered!" she cried in alarm.

"Maybe it is your brother and Frank," said Commander Hewlett.

"No," said Jack quietly, "it is not they."

He dropped his hands to his pockets, and they reappeared in another moment with his two automatics. He stepped out of the line of fire through the door, and stood to one side, guarding the entrance.

Commander Hewlett's pair of automatics also glinted in his hands, and he took his stand on the opposite side of the door.

Marion sprang quickly to the mantelpiece at the opposite side of the room, and when she again faced the door she also held a revolver.

"We'll give them a fight," said Jack grimly.

A hand was laid on the knob on the outside of the door. Then it turned. There was a muttered imprecation from without, followed by the sound of a guttural voice which uttered the one word:

"Locked!"

A moment more and there was a heavy knock

on the door. Those within the room remained perfectly silent. Came a heavier knock from without, and still no reply from within.

"Open the door!" came a stern voice. "In the name of the Emperor I command you to open the door at once!"

Still nothing but silence from within.

"Open the door at once!" came the repeated command. "Do you hear me?"

"Yes," replied Jack, stepping closer to the door, "by what right do you seek admittance to a private home at this hour of the night?"

"In the name of the Emperor," said the voice again, "I command you to open this door immediately!"

"We refuse," said Jack quietly.

There was a moment's silence, followed by another command from without:

"Break it in, men!"

"I warn you," cried Jack, "that the first man who crosses this threshold will die!"

Came the heavy sound of a blow upon the door.

Jack glanced about the room. Marion Nelson stood directly in front of the door, though some distance back.

"Get back out of the line of fire, Miss Nelson," said Jack, waving her to the far side of the room.

Without a word the girl obeyed. She still held



her revolver firmly, and now she examined it carefully.

A guttural voice came from without once more :

"This is too slow work. Pick up those chairs, men, and batter it in!"

A few seconds of silence, followed by several crashing blows upon the door. It shook and trembled, but still it held.

"Let me get there," came a voice from without.

A moment later there rang out the sound of a revolver shot, and beneath the weight of German soldiers, the door toppled inward. The lock had been blown away.

The first three Germans to enter the room fell as one man, as Commander Hewlett, Miss Nelson and Jack opened fire; but others piled in after them. Three more went down before the sweeping fire of the automatics, but still they pressed on.

"To the floor!" cried Jack suddenly, leaping backward.

With his left hand he pressed a button on the walls, throwing the room into utter darkness. Then he again blazed away at the Germans in the door.

Fallen men strewed the floor, almost blocking the doorway.

But now, as Jack pressed the trigger of his automatic again, there was a metallic click. His weapons were empty and there was no time to reload. The cessation of fire from the girl and

Commander Hewlett told him that they were in the same predicament.

Thinking only of the girl—for Jack would have fought on to the end—the lad suddenly cried out:

“We surrender!”

Instantly the sound of revolver shots ceased. Rising to his feet, he once more pressed the electric button, and light flooded the room.

Jack took in the situation in one quick comprehending glance. Marion Nelson sat calmly at the far end of the room, her empty revolver in her hand. Although Jack did not know it, she had been thus for some moments while the battle raged, for she had emptied her magazine early in the struggle. Still there she had sat, in the midst of the confusion and flying bullets, uttering no word.

From behind a large sideboard Commander Hewlett now emerged. He was bleeding from a slight wound in the head where a bullet had grazed him; but Jack saw at a glance that he was not seriously wounded.

Jack himself was suffering from a slight wound just above the temple. Right where the German bullets flew thickest he had taken his post, but as by a miracle, he had been touched but this once.

The lad threw his empty revolvers upon the table. Commander Hewlett and Marion did the same. Then they turned to face the German officer, at a command from whom, two of the soldiers

placed chairs near the table. At a nod from the German officer Jack, Commander Hewlett and Marion sat down in them.

"Now," said the Teuton commander, "you will remain here until we make a search of the house."

Leaving three men to guard his prisoners, he made his way from the room, followed by the rest of his soldiers.

"Well," declared Commander Hewlett when they had gone, "it looks like they have us all right."

"Yes," said Marion calmly, "there is no chance for us to get away."

"Never lose heart," suggested Jack quietly. "While there is life there is hope, you know."

"But there won't be life very long, I am afraid," replied the girl. "We shall probably all be shot as spies."

A sudden sound in the next room attracted Jack's attention. He was certain he heard someone moving about.

"More of the German soldiers, I suppose," he said to himself.

But, for some unaccountable reason, his spirits began to rise. He looked at the soldiers who stood guard over them. Apparently they had not heard the sound, or if they had, they paid no attention to it. They kept their eyes upon their prisoners.

Upstairs, the German soldiers entered the room where lay the unsuspecting British air-pilots. These

they pounced upon as they lay sleeping, and soon had them bound securely. Then they turned their attention to the other rooms, and proceeded to ransack them thoroughly.

They were still engaged in this occupation when Marion Nelson, in the room below, suddenly became conscious of movements in the next room. She glanced quickly at Jack, and he smiled at her. He realized that she had heard what he had, and laid a finger to his lips. The girl nodded in understanding.

Then the door to the adjoining room was pulled back and a face peered in through the doorway; but it disappeared in a moment.

The three prisoners sat at the far end of the table facing the door. Therefore they had seen the figure in the doorway, while their guards, with their backs turned to the door, were unaware of the presence of others in the room behind them.

The three prisoners did not betray even by the slightest expression what they had seen, but continued to converse in low tones as they sat close together, under the weapons of their captors. All were on edge, awaiting any move that might allow them to make a dash for freedom.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE ESCAPE.

THIS, then, was the sight that Frank beheld when he peered into the dining-room, after he and Nelson had left their prisoner bound and gagged in the parlor.

The lad grasped Nelson by the shoulder, and the latter also peered into the room beyond, giving vent as he did so to a low exclamation of surprise.

"Quiet!" whispered Frank. "We must release them; but we must do it without noise, for there are probably others in the house."

Nelson nodded that he understood, and Frank taking the lead the two slowly tiptoed through the door into the dining-room. Each held two revolvers. Frank covered two of the German soldiers, and Nelson the third.

Still not a sign escaped the three prisoners.

"Hands up!" commanded Frank in a low, sharp voice.

The soldiers whirled about suddenly, only to confront the leveled revolvers of Frank and Nelson. At the same moment Jack and Commander Hewlett sprang to their feet silently and, pouncing upon

the unloaded revolvers that still lay upon the table, brought them down violently upon the heads of two of their recent captors. Both men fell without a groan, and the third, bewildered by the suddenness of the attack, silently lowered the weapon he had half raised.

"Quick!" whispered Jack. "The others may return in a moment, and we must be gone before they arrive. I don't like to do this," he continued, "but we can't be bothered with prisoners."

With these words he brought the butt of his revolver down upon the defenseless head of the third German soldier, who toppled gently to the floor, supported by Frank's arms.

"Now," whispered Frank, "let's get out of here immediately," and he started for the front door.

But it was too late. Sounds of footsteps descending the stairs came to his ears, and he turned back.

"It's no use," he said quietly. "We shall have to fight it out."

But now Walter Nelson, who had been bending over his sister, sprang to action. Quickly he darted behind the large sideboard, motioning for the others to follow him.

He pressed a protruding piece of woodwork sharply with his finger, and Jack, who was close behind him, uttered a low whistle of amazement.

An opening appeared in the smooth surface of

the wall, as a concealed door slowly swung backward.

Nelson stood aside until the others had passed through the secret door, then entered himself and closed the door behind him. Here, in the darkness, he whispered to all to remain silent, lest the Germans who would soon enter the room should hear the sound of their retreating footsteps.

It was well that he did so; for, at that moment, led by the German commander, the soldiers again trooped into the room.

The commander cast one quick glance about, and then uttered a cry of amazement and chagrin.

"Where are the prisoners?" he cried in a loud voice.

His eyes fell upon the prostrate bodies of his three men. He gave vent to a fierce German imprecation as he stirred their bodies with an angry foot.

"You dogs!" he cried. "So you have allowed them to escape, eh? Well, you shall suffer for it."

Seizing a pitcher of water that stood on the table, he dashed it into their faces, and as one showed signs of returning consciousness, he lifted him rudely to his feet.

"Tell me," he commanded, "where are the prisoners?"

He held the trembling man by the collar with his left hand, and in his right gleamed his sword.



"Where are the prisoners?" he repeated.

"I don't know, sir," came the trembling response.

"You don't know?"

"No, sir. We were attacked suddenly from behind, and as we turned to face our new foes, the prisoners attacked us."

The German commander released his hold upon the soldier and with the flat of his sword struck him a stinging blow across the face. The man recoiled under the blow and stood with bowed head.

"You shall suffer for this!" shouted the commander, and turned to the rest of his men. "Out of the house and scour the neighborhood!" he cried. "They cannot have gone very far."

With the flat of his sword he struck right and left at his men as they fled beneath his wrath to do his bidding.

All this the fugitives heard from their concealment behind the wall, and while they did not see the frantic actions of the German commander, they surmised what was going on.

The officer stood in the room a few minutes reflecting, then followed his men from the house.

"Now," said Nelson to the others, "we can make our way along the passage without fear of being overheard."

"Wait a minute," said Jack. "What of Brown and Brice?"

In their eagerness to get away the others had completely forgotten the presence of the two British air-pilots in the house.

"We can't go away and leave them behind," said Jack. He turned to Nelson. "Open the door for me and I'll get them," he said briefly.

Walter Nelson hesitated. It was a big risk, and he knew it, for it might mean not only Jack's death, but that of all in the passageway, should the secret passage be betrayed. But his hesitation was only momentary. Then he quietly opened the door.

"Knock sharply once when you return," he said quietly. "I'll be here to admit you."

Jack issued from the secret passageway. Outside he stopped a moment to listen. There was no sound. Quickly he dashed through the hall and up the steps. Here, peering into several rooms, he at last came upon the two pilots. They were lying upon the bed bound and gagged.

Rapidly the lad untied their bonds and removed the gags.

"Slip into your clothes quick!" he commanded.

This was the work of an instant, and motioning for them to be silent, Jack led the way back down the stairs. There was no one in sight, and quickly the men followed him to the secret passage.

Jack gave one sharp knock and the door flew open. Hastily all entered and the door closed be-

hind them. Then, just as they would have started down the passageway, there came the sound of footsteps in the room they had just quitted. Nelson raised a hand and all stood stockstill.

"I can't imagine where they have gone," came the voice of the German commander. "Maybe those men upstairs can tell me. Bring them down, Fritz!"

A single man left the room, as the listeners could tell by the sound of his footsteps. He was gone some moments, and then returned at a mad dash.

"They are not there, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Not there!" repeated the officer. "Nonsense, man. They must be there. They were securely bound and gagged, I saw to that myself. It would be impossible for them to escape."

"But they have gone, sir, and their bonds and gags lie upon the floor."

The German commander bounded to his feet.

"What kind of a house is this?" he demanded in an angry voice. "Those men could not have freed themselves. The other prisoners must be hiding in the house. Search the house, men, every nook and corner; and if you don't find them, some of you shall feel the weight of my fist!"

Walter Nelson now drew Frank and the two pilots down the dark passageway. Jack, Commander Hewlett and Marion had gone on before,

while Nelson waited at the secret door to admit Jack when he returned with the pilots.

"Nice pleasant kind of a commander," whispered Jack, as they made their way silently along.

"Rather," replied Nelson grimly. "If he were a British officer some of his men would have shot him long ago."

From the dark passageway they at last emerged into what appeared to be another room. Here the others awaited them.

"Where on earth are we?" asked Frank.

"Right now," replied Nelson, "we are in the house next to mine. I rented both houses, though under different names, for just such an emergency as this. From here there is a second passageway, yonder," pointing across the room, "which leads to the bank of the Elbe river. There I have an exceptionally fast motorboat. I planned this means of escape many days ago."

"But what good is a motorboat in the Elbe river?" asked Jack. "Isn't it well guarded?"

"Not so well as you might think," was the reply, "and you are right when you think it strange, in view of other German war preparations. But the Germans are absolutely positive that they have nothing to fear from within and that no sea-going craft could penetrate into the Elbe."

"And is your motorboat seaworthy?"

"Absolutely, as you shall see. In another hour we shall be homeward bound."

"Is it your plan to make a dash for the English coast in a motorboat?"

"Yes."

"But," protested Frank, "won't some vessel of war pick us up and dispose of us easily?"

"Of course we shall have to take a desperate chance," replied Nelson, "but I am prepared to give a good account of myself. In three minutes I can create such a disturbance in the harbor as to practically insure our escape."

"How?" asked Frank.

"A little trick of my own," was the reply, "but you shall see when the time comes. Another thing: in the little motorboat there is less chance of our being seen, particularly in heavy weather, such as it is this morning. Besides which, the light draft of the motorboat will add to our safety, for there will be that much less chance of striking submerged mines."

"I see you have it all figured out," declared Jack with a smile.

"Down to a T," replied Walter Nelson. "But come, we may as well be moving."

He led the way across the room and, moving a large table, pressed another hidden spring. A second secret door was exposed to view, and standing

aside until the others had entered the retreat, Nelson also stepped in and closed the door behind them.

Then, with the British secret agent in the lead, the little party crept silently down the dark passageway.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## FLIGHT.

It was very dark in the passageway, which was so narrow that the seven were forced to proceed in single file. Behind Nelson came Marion, then Frank, Jack and Commander Hewlett, the latter being followed by Brown and Brice, the two air-pilots. Nelson felt the way carefully with outstretched arms and progress was therefore slow.

"Is there any danger of this passageway being discovered?" Frank called over Marion's shoulder to Nelson.

"Not much, I should say," was the reply. "Of course it is possible, but I should say highly improbable."

"Now, about this boat," said Frank; "is it large enough to carry us all?"

"Yes, and then some," answered Nelson. "It has a seating capacity of twenty-five."

After walking along slowly for more than half an hour, Nelson finally emerged into the open and soon all had followed him from the passage. Glancing about the boys saw that they were on the very



edge of a body of water. Nelson caught their glance.

"This is the Elbe," he said, and pointing some distance down the stream he added, "and there is my boat."

The lads glanced quickly at it. It was a long, slender craft, giving the appearance of great speed. The first look showed Frank and Jack that it was seaworthy; and while they were too far away to say positively, each imagined he could make out an opening that must lead to cabins below.

Walter Nelson, after a careful look around, led the way toward the little craft, and soon all had passed aboard without being seen.

"Know anything about motors?" asked Nelson of Frank.

"A little," was the reply.

"Good! Then I shall do the steering while you keep a watchful eye on these."

It was now almost six o'clock in the morning, and a faint gray streaked the sky, heralding the approach of another day. A thick mist overhung the river. Nelson glanced above.

"It will be daylight shortly," he said. "We'll have to hurry."

After some little tinkering with the motors, Nelson arose and ordered all but Frank below.

"The fewer in sight the better," he explained. "I'll call the rest of you if you are needed."

Jack, Commander Hewlett, Marion and the two pilots descended to the cabin.

Now the motors began to purr gently, and with Nelson at the wheel, the little craft began to drop slowly down the stream.

The river at this point was jammed with other and larger vessels, which had taken refuge in it following the outbreak of the war. It was, therefore, necessary for the motorboat to proceed cautiously to avoid bumping into them in the mist. Also, as Nelson had explained, too great haste would excite suspicion.

Several other small craft were moving in the stream, and so the *Vivian*, for such the motorboat was named, was not challenged as she headed slowly toward the sea.

"I don't anticipate any trouble until we get to the mouth of the river," Nelson explained. "Then we shall have to go ahead at full speed, taking a chance of running into a mine."

For an hour the *Vivian* continued on her way without incident. Then it grew suddenly light. The mist disappeared and a streak of sunlight flashed across the motorboat.

"Well, we can see better now," said Nelson, "but I would have preferred the mist. It gave us a little more security."

Frank said nothing, but attended strictly to business.

"Another hour," said Nelson, "will see us in the North Sea."

From the rear, at this moment, came the faint sound of other motorboats following them. The chug-chug, though a considerable distance behind, came plainly to Frank's ears and he looked back.

Bearing down upon them as fast they could came a small flotilla of river craft. Frank called Nelson's attention to them.

"Do you suppose they are after us?" he asked.

"Don't know," was the brief response. "We'll see."

The speed of the *Vivian* was quickened a trifle, but still it was plain that they were being overhauled by the others.

"I'm not afraid of them overtaking us," said Nelson, "for the motorboat that can keep up with the *Vivian* doesn't live, nor warship either for that matter. She was built according to my own specifications and I know what she can do. The thing that worries me is that we shall have to increase our speed again before we reach the sea, in which event some of the ships of war may open on us."

Accordingly the *Vivian* still proceeded at a moderate speed.

The river suddenly widened. Between the great ships that filled the harbor darted the *Vivian*. Merchantmen and vessels of war were jammed into the entrance of the river without order or formation.

The pursuing flotilla of motorboats grew nearer.

Now, emerging from between two merchant vessels, the *Vivian* headed for the open sea. There were still several ships in her way, and she nosed cautiously around the first.

And then, immediately behind, two motorboats dashed after them. A man arose in the bow of the closest one and aimed a revolver at Nelson, who was at the wheel.

Quickly Frank sprang to the stern of the boat. His own revolver flashed in the sunlight. With a firm hand he fired, even as the German behind would have shot Walter Nelson down.

"Well," said Nelson quietly, "we'll have to fight now. Call the rest of the men!"

Frank sprang to the little companionway, and in response to his shout, the others soon appeared on deck—even Marion, who advanced to her brother's side. The latter waved her away and turned to Jack.

"See that box at the far end of the deck," he said quietly.

Jack nodded in assent.

"Open it," commanded Nelson, "and bring me several of the smaller objects you find there."

Jack hastened to obey. Opening the box he started back in surprise. He recognized the contents in a moment. However, he uttered no word and carried three of the smaller bombs to Nelson.

The latter turned the wheel over to one of the pilots and rose to his feet.

"Now I'll show you something," he said.

Two motorboats dashed upon the *Vivian* close together. Nelson, grasping the rail of the *Vivian* with his left hand, drew back his right, in which he grasped the bomb, and hurled it violently right into the first pursuing vessel.

Instantly there was a loud explosion, followed by cries of despair. A cloud of smoke arose, and when it had cleared away the two pursuing motorboats had disappeared.

"Melinite!" said Nelson briefly.

"But Great Scott!" exclaimed Frank. "Supposing a shell from a hostile ship hit us, or a rifle ball happened to hit one of those bombs, what would happen then?"

Nelson smiled grimly.

"There wouldn't be any of us left to tell about it," he said.

Apparently not realizing the fate that had overtaken the others, three other pursuing motorboats now drew near to the *Vivian*. Nelson, who had resumed the wheel, turned to Jack.

"Throw?" he asked briefly.

"Well, some," replied Jack.

"Straight?"

"Pretty straight."

"Well, it's your shot then. See if you can get them all with one throw."

With a stick of the terrible explosive in his hand, Jack poised himself for a quick throw. His right arm drew back, and he hurled the deadly missile into the distance.

His aim was true, and the high explosive sped straight and true toward the pursuers. It struck the bow of the first boat with a crash.

A second terrific detonation as he blew the first craft down through the water, and the shock of the explosion caused the others to turn turtle.

"Good shot!" said Nelson calmly. "Keep your eyes open now, there are probably more of them about. I'll stick to the wheel and let you do the fighting."

At this moment a new and greater enemy joined the fight.

From a mile to stern a German cruiser suddenly opened on the little motorboat with her bow guns. And a few seconds a closer cruiser also began to throw shells. The *Vivian* at that moment was running close under the side of a third German ship of war, a third cruiser somewhat larger than the rest. Men rushed about her deck and peered over the rail. She was too close to bring her guns to bear, but there was little doubt in Jack's mind that she would blow them out of the water as soon as the

*Vivian* had drawn far enough away to permit of the cruiser's big guns being brought to bear.

At that moment Nelson cried to Frank:

"We'll have to make our dash now. Full speed ahead, Frank!"

The *Vivian* jumped forward like a thing alive, and was soon speeding away from the cruiser. Jack, glancing again at the ship of war, saw hurried preparations being made upon her deck.

With a shout he raised the melinite he held in his hand and hurled it, with unerring aim, at the giant cruiser.

There came one terrific explosion, followed by a series of smaller ones. The German cruiser sprang into a sheet of flame. In an instant she was a raging furnace. Her magazines had exploded.

Men threw themselves into the sea. The hundreds who had been injured were left to their fate. Surprised at the sudden fate that had overtaken their sister ship, the crews of the other German cruisers in the harbor paused a moment in their fire; then hurled their shells at the motorboat swifter than before.

Around the *Vivian* the water churned angrily. As the German cruiser, with a great hiss, plunged beneath the water, the suction all but drew the little motorboat under also. She plunged desperately forward, and just as it seemed to those aboard



that she must surely be drawn under, she darted suddenly forward.

All aboard drew a breath of relief. They had gained a momentary reprieve. They still had a fighting chance.

Nelson, peering intently into the water, kept a sharp lookout for mines. They were free of the harbor now, and the water ahead of them was clear.

The *Vivian* dashed straight for the open sea.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE FIGHT AT SEA.

"WE can either head due north, passing close to Helgoland, and then turn west; or we can steer due west, and, passing close to the East Frisian islands, make for the British coast."

It was Walter Nelson who spoke.

"Which would be the safer, do you think?" asked Jack.

"Well," was the reply, "I should say that one way is about as safe—or as dangerous—as the other. It makes little difference."

"I should think," said Frank, "that there would be fewer German warships to the north."

"We'll head north, then," said Nelson.

The entire party of fugitives still stood upon the deck of the *Vivian* as the little craft plowed up the water in her mad dash for liberty. They had now put some distance between themselves and the German cruisers in the harbor they had just left, and were now out of range of the big guns aboard the vessel. Shots had plowed up the water close to them, but so far the *Vivian* had not been touched.

"They'll undoubtedly flash a warning to all war-

ships to be on the lookout for us," said Nelson, "so besides looking for floating mines we shall have to watch for cruisers also."

"Right," said Frank, "and we can't afford to let any of them get too close."

Perhaps half an hour passed before Jack, standing in the prow of the motorboat, made out a cloud of smoke coming toward them from the west.

"German warship bearing down upon us from the west!" he called out.

Nelson arose and peered toward the cloud of smoke.

"She's too far away to intercept us," he said, resuming his seat.

Presently the German cruiser, for such she proved to be, came into full view. She was now heading northwest, it plainly being her commander's intention to head the *Vivian* off. However, it became apparent as time passed that this attempt would be futile.

"We must have passed Helgoland in the distance," Nelson now said. "I believe that by a quick dash to the west we can elude the German and make good our escape."

"Let's go west then," said Frank.

Accordingly the course of the little vessel was instantly changed, and she swung her head westward, describing a sharp angle. The German cruiser perceived this maneuver and also swung about.

It was plainly evident now, however, that the German could not hope to cut off the escape of the *Vivian*. They would pass her at a distance of considerably more than a mile.

Then, from further north, came a second cloud of smoke, and ere long a second German cruiser came into sight and also hurried after the *Vivian*.

"Neither can catch us," said Nelson calmly. "But let us hope a new one doesn't come out of the west."

But here those aboard the *Vivian* were doomed to bitter disappointment. With the two vessels still pursuing from the north, and escape by the south absolutely cut off because of the fact that it was known to be patrolled by German warships, a cloud of smoke suddenly came into sight straight ahead of the *Vivian*, due west.

Frank was the first to perceive the approach of this new enemy and he cried out in alarm.

"We are surrounded!" he exclaimed. "What shall we do now?"

Nelson arose from the wheel and glanced about him. In one comprehending glance his keen eyes took in the seriousness of the situation. Then he sat down and turned the matter over in his mind. At last he spoke.

"I suppose you all know what fate is in store for us if we are captured?" he questioned, turning his eyes on the others.

"Death!" replied Jack calmly.

"Exactly," said Nelson, "a spy's death for each and every one of us. Now I have a plan by which we can probably escape. I don't know as it would be considered exactly proper, according to the rules of warfare, but I can't see as that makes any difference in this case. Our lives are at stake."

"I should say that any means were permissible," exclaimed Frank.

"And so should I," said Jack.

"Escape at all hazards is my view," said Commander Hewlett quietly.

"All right then," said Nelson. "I shall put my plan into execution."

"What is your plan?" demanded Jack eagerly.

Nelson was silent for some moments, plainly turning the matter over in his mind.

"No," he said at length, "I won't tell you. Then you can profess ignorance should any questions be asked."

And from this determination he would not be moved.

The *Vivian* was now headed straight for the German cruiser approaching from the west. Nearer and nearer drew the two vessels, one large, the other small.

The other two cruisers the *Vivian* had hopelessly outdistanced, although they still continued the chase, and were near enough to cut off the little motor-

boat should she bear off on any other than her present course.

Now, as the *Vivian* neared the third German cruiser, a puff of smoke issued from the enemy, and a moment later a shell plowed up the water. To this Nelson paid no heed, and a little later a second shell struck close.

"Well," said Walter Nelson, "here goes."

A white flag was suddenly unfurled on the prow of the little motorboat.

"Great Scott! he's going to surrender!" exclaimed Frank.

Jack was equally as surprised, as were apparently Commander Hewlett and the two British pilots. Marion said nothing.

There were no more shots from the German cruiser, as the *Vivian* drew closer, although more slowly. At last they came within hailing distance.

"What boat is that?" came the cry across the water.

"Motorboat *Vivian*, British!" Nelson shouted back, standing up.

"Approach closer!" came the command.

The *Vivian* did so, and finally drew very near to the German cruiser.

"Avast there!" came the command from the enemy. "Come no closer! Stay where you are. A boat will be sent aboard you!"

Nelson made no reply to this command, but turning the wheel over to Jack, walked forward. There was no haste in his step, no excitement in his manner as he approached the box which held the melinite.

Calmly he bent over and selected two of the largest. Then he arose to his feet, and with one in either hand, approached the rail nearest the German cruiser.

It could be seen that preparations were being made aboard the enemy to lower a boat.

Suddenly Walter Nelson drew back one arm and then shot it rapidly forward. Something flew out over the water in the direction of the cruiser. Frank and Jack cried out in alarm.

It was a melinite bomb which the secret agent had hurled at the enemy.

Silently all watched its flight. From aboard the German vessel arose a loud cry. Evidently those aboard had realized what was coming toward them through the air.

But the missile fell short. Nelson had not gauged the distance accurately.

Immediately from aboard the enemy broke out the fire of small arms, as the officers commanded their men to pick off those in the little boat.

But the sailors had been somewhat unnerved by the sight of the explosive flying toward them, and



their aim was bad, so that while several bullets fell aboard the *Vivian*, no one was injured.

Now Walter Nelson raised the second bomb in his hand. His lips were set grimly and the fingers of his left hand twitched. He would not miss again.

His arm went back behind him, and he brought it forward with swift violence. The explosive went hurtling through the air.

Another cry broke out aboard the enemy; but there was no time for more. The melinite struck the side of the German cruiser a little forward of amidships, and it exploded upon the moment of contact.

One loud, long roar and it was all over. Struck a deathblow, the cruiser staggered and quickly began to settle. Men flung themselves headlong into the sea, and clung to what pieces of wreckage they could find.

Immediately Nelson ordered full speed ahead.

"The other cruisers can pick up those in the water," he said calmly. "There is no use in our waiting for them to come up and sink us."

The *Vivian* dashed off once more on her course toward England, paying no heed to the struggling men in the water; for as Nelson had said, the other German cruisers, approaching rapidly, would arrive in time to save them.

To say that Jack and Frank were surprised at Nelson's act is putting it mildly. While they had been in favor of any plan he had, they had not anticipated any such action. They were somewhat in doubt as to the ethics of this kind of warfare, and said so to Commander Hewlett.

"Well, it would hardly be called fair," was the only comment the latter would make.

"It does seem wrong to take them by surprise like that, after they thought we had surrendered," said Frank.

"I can't see where it is any worse than for a submarine to attack a warship without warning," replied Jack.

"Well, that's so, too," agreed Frank. "I should say one is as legitimate as the other."

All aboard the *Vivian* felt they were now safe from the enemy's war vessels and that the only danger that lay in their path were the mines strewn over the surface of the North Sea by their foe. For these, as the *Vivian* sped rapidly on her course, they kept careful watch.

Frank had just returned on deck after a light meal—Nelson kept a goodly stock of provisions aboard—when his attention was again attracted by a smudge upon the horizon.

"Steamer approaching," he informed Nelson.

Nelson gave vent to an exclamation of disgust.

"I was in hopes we were through with them," he said.

He arose and walked again to the box. Securing two sticks, he returned to the wheel.

"Well, I'm ready for 'em!" he said quietly.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## SAFE AT LAST.

SLOWLY the smudge on the horizon drew closer, until those aboard the *Vivian* could make out that the approaching vessel was a cruiser of the first class. It was headed directly for them, and it was evident that there was no escape for the little motor-boat. If she turned back she would run squarely into the enemy in the rear.

Frank was struck with a sudden thought.

"Maybe this cruiser is British," he said hopefully.

"No such luck," was Nelson's response.

They could now make out the vessel plainly. She flew no colors, and at that distance it was impossible for the lads to make out her identity.

Soon she drew within range of the *Vivian* and one of her forward turret guns spoke.

"Signal to show our colors," said Nelson. "Well, we'll show 'em to her."

The British ensign was run up, and those aboard the *Vivian* waited to see the Red, White and Black of Germany soar from the cruiser.

Then they were treated to one of the greatest surprises of their lives.

A flag was unfurled aboard the cruiser, but it was not the Red, White and Black of Germany. It was the ensign of Great Britain!

Exclamations of delight escaped Frank and Jack, but Nelson quickly threw cold water upon their rising spirits.

"Don't be too sure she's English," he said. "It may be a German trick."

"As a pessimist," said Frank, somewhat disappointed, "you are about the best I have ever seen."

"When you are as old as I am," was the reply, "you will probably be one yourself."

"I hope not," was the lad's brief rejoinder.

A small boat, flying the British flag, put off over the side of the cruiser and approached the motor-boat, which at a command from the war vessel, had stopped her motors and lay quiet.

Jack, standing in the prow of the vessel, scanned the faces of the boat's crew eagerly.

"Don't look like Germans," he said hopefully.

Frank stepped to his side and also peered eagerly across the water.

"No," he agreed; then, "By George! they are English. I can see them plainly now!"

The two lads walked over to where Walter Nelson stood, and Frank clapped him on the back.

"Cheer up," he said with a laugh. "This is once where your pessimism fooled you."

Nelson smiled ruefully.

"Well, I am glad I was mistaken for once," he replied.

The cruiser's launch drew within earshot. An officer arose and called out:

"What boat is that?"

"British motorboat *Vivian*!" Nelson shouted back. "Who are you?"

"British cruiser *Emmerson*!" was the reply.

"Approach!" cried Nelson.

A few moments later a British officer stepped aboard the *Vivian*. He recognized Walter Nelson in an instant and jumped forward with a cry:

"Walter!"

"Harry!" exclaimed Nelson, and the two stood quietly for a few moments clasping hands, forgetting those about them.

Then Nelson turned to the others.

"Allow me to introduce," said he, "Lieutenant Harry Peyton, my friends."

The British officer acknowledged the introduction with a bow, and shook hands with all the men separately. Then he asked Nelson to have the *Vivian* brought alongside the *Emmerson*.

"Captain Jackson will be glad to see you and your sister," said Lieutenant Peyton to Nelson, "and will be interested in an account of your ad-

ventures. You must have had quite a time getting out of Hamburg."

"We did," replied Nelson significantly, "and, my word for it, we are lucky to be here."

Nelson, Marion, Jack, Frank and Commander Hewlett, once aboard the *Emmerson*, were immediately escorted to the commander's cabin, where, after introductions, they related their experiences.

"And you say," said Captain Jackson, when the account had been concluded, "that there are two German cruisers only a little ways back?"

"Yes, sir," replied Jack.

"Then," said the commander, "we shall give them battle."

He turned to Lieutenant Peyton with an order, and the latter hurried away. A crew was put aboard the *Vivian*, with instructions to take her to London, while the *Emmerson*, getting under way at once, steamed toward the spot where Walter Nelson so recently had sunk a German cruiser, and where Captain Jackson believed the other two of the enemy's ships would be standing by.

The hour was now 1 o'clock and after two hours of rapid steaming the lookout aboard the *Emmerson* made out the two German cruisers. These had long since completed their work of rescue, and were about to put about and return to Helgoland—running the blockade in as they had run it out—



when they caught sight of the single British cruiser bearing down on them.

The wireless apparatus on all three ships immediately broke into action, and upon learning that the approaching cruiser was an enemy, the German commanders decided to give battle.

The three ships moved slowly toward each other.

The *Emmerson* had the advantage of heavier guns and a greater range. Therefore her forward guns broke into action before those of the enemy. The Germans, however, were planning to overcome this handicap by a quick dash, that they might bring their guns into action at the earliest possible moment, before the British could do great execution.

But they had reckoned without the superb marksmanship of the British gunners.

Two British shells burst aboard the cruiser off the port side before she could get within range, doing terrific damage. She was swept from stem to stern by a raking fire. Her superstructure tumbled, her funnels were shot down, and shell after shell pierced her below the water line. She staggered, then moved forward again, though more slowly. Another well-directed shell burst squarely upon her bridge, blowing her commander to atoms. Officers and men were hurled hither and thither about the deck. Then, of a sudden, there was an

explosion aboard her. A British shell had penetrated to her boiler.

The *Emmerson* now turned her attention exclusively to the cruiser on her starboard side, leaving the first to sink without having fired an effective shot.

During the conflict the second cruiser had come within range and now opened upon the *Emmerson* with all her forward guns. The British returned the fire with a vengeance, and shells commenced to burst under and above both vessels with lightning-like rapidity and with great violence.

The damage to both cruisers was great, the loss of life heavy. A German shell struck the *Emmerson* squarely in her armored prow, and she seemed to stagger back. No great damage was done by this shot, however, and she continued to forge ahead.

The German cruiser next maneuvered so that she could bring her broadside to bear upon the *Emmerson*. Taking advantage of this, the British gunners poured in a deadly fire with their forward guns. Then the British ship outmaneuvered the enemy so that the Germans were unable to bring their broadside to bear.

The two vessels were about evenly matched in men and, at this close range, in armament. So far an advantage rested with neither side. But a British shell now burst amidship of the German, doing

fearful havoc. The cries of the wounded arose even above the sounds of battle.

Turning his eyes to leeward, Frank, who had been on deck during the height of the battle, saw another cruiser bearing down upon the struggling ships. Five minutes later he made out her colors.

She was English.

The lad communicated this fact to Captain Jackson. But the German commander had also perceived the approach of this new foe, and with one last salvo from his forward guns, he quickly turned the cruiser's head and attempted to make off.

But Captain Jackson was not minded to let his prey slip through his fingers, and immediately gave chase. The bow guns of the *Emmerson* continued to play upon the enemy, and the latter continued the duel with his stern guns.

A chance shot from the *Emmerson* cleared the stern of the enemy and landed squarely on the bridge, where it burst. There was a terrible confusion aboard the German cruiser, and a moment later a white flag took the place of the German ensign.

"She has struck!" exclaimed Jack in delight.

Immediately the British guns ceased their fire. By signals the commander of the German cruiser was instructed to order his men over the side, which he did. These were picked up by the British sailors in small boats and made prisoners aboard the *Em-*

*merson*. The German commander and his officers were also picked up.

Then, drawing closer and bringing all available guns to bear, the *Emmerson* poured salvo after salvo into the already sinking cruiser until she finally sank beneath the eyes of the crew of the *Emmerson*, who raised a loud cheer.

Captain Jackson wirelessly the commander of the approaching British cruiser that his assistance was not needed, and the latter immediately turned and made off.

"Which way are you bound, now, captain?" asked Frank, after the damage to the *Emmerson* had been repaired and the ship was standing toward the west.

"Straight to Dover," was the reply.

"By any chance," said Frank, "do you know the present whereabouts of the cruiser *Northumberland* and Lord Hastings?"

"Why, yes," was the reply. "Lord Hastings has been named commander of the new British submarine *D-16*, which will be put into commission next week. He is in London at present, I believe, having turned the *Northumberland* over to Commander Wray."

Frank cried out in delight, as did Jack who stood by him.

"Then," said both in one voice, "that's where we want to go!"

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## LORD HASTINGS IS SURPRISED.

LANDING in Dover, Frank and Jack bade their friends good-by and took a train for London. Walter Nelson and his sister Marion announced that they would not go to the English metropolis until the following day, and Commander Hewlett remained in Dover to seek some tidings of his ship. The man who had piloted the lads' *aéroplane* asked for leave to visit his mother in Dover, and this Jack granted him.

In London the two boys went immediately to Lord Hastings' home. His Lordship was away, but Lady Hastings greeted the boys warmly.

"Lord Hastings told me that you had been killed!" she exclaimed.

"We are not that easily disposed of," said Frank laughing. "We had several narrow escapes; but I am beginning to believe we have more lives than a cat."

Upon Lady Hastings' request the lads gave her an account of their adventures, and then Jack asked:

"When do you expect Lord Hastings home?"

"Hardly before evening," was the reply, "and he certainly will be overjoyed to see you."

Now Frank bethought himself that it would be pleasant to surprise Lord Hastings. Accordingly they asked and were granted permission to go to their commander's room, where, when it neared the hour of his return, they concealed themselves under the bed.

They had been in concealment scarcely five minutes when a heavy footstep heralded Lord Hastings' approach and the boys became silent.

Lord Hastings, having entered his room, set immediately about the task of preparing for dinner.

Frank, crawling quietly from beneath the bed, arose while his commander's back was turned, and, unperceived, stole across the room to the door, against which he leaned with folded arms. Then he uttered a ghastly groan.

Lord Hastings wheeled about suddenly. He saw the form in the doorway and recognized Frank's face. The lad made no move, and Lord Hastings, with a startled exclamation drew back and passed his hand over his eyes.

"Can I be dreaming?" he muttered.

He took a step forward, and Frank, still without changing his position, uttered another low groan. Lord Hastings paused in his stride, and then turned and glanced over his shoulder.

While this was going on, Jack also had crept

from beneath the bed and taken a position similar to Frank's at the other end of the room. Lord Hastings, turning now, beheld the face of his first officer.

"Never until now," muttered Lord Hastings, "did I believe in ghosts."

He made a bow to the two figures.

"I am glad to see you, ghosts though you are," he said, addressing the two lads. "Perhaps you can tell me how my young friends died."

Now Lord Hastings was not a superstitious man, but he had every reason to believe that Frank and Jack had perished. Therefore, he was utterly at a loss to account for their presence. His real idea was that he was suffering an hallucination.

But so grave was his manner that Frank was forced to smile. As he did so Lord Hastings took a quick step forward and grasped him by the shoulder. In that moment he realized that his young friends had returned to him.

Lord Hastings uttered an exclamation of pure delight.

"You are a pretty substantial ghost," he cried, seizing the lad in his arms. "Tell me, where have you been all this time? I was sure that you were dead."

Before Frank could reply, Lord Hastings had whirled upon Jack, crossed the room in a few quick strides, and seized him affectionately.



"And you, too, are rather a healthy ghost," he cried. "Come, tell me about yourselves."

Briefly Jack recounted their adventures since they had set sail in their seaplane from the *North-umberland*.

"So!" exclaimed Lord Hastings when he had concluded, "Commander Hewlett was saved, too, eh?"

"Yes," was Jack's reply, "and but for him we would probably have been killed; for it was he who led the flight from the German aircraft."

"Then I am indeed grateful to him," said Lord Hastings warmly.

"And the raid was a success?" asked Frank.

"Absolutely a success; and now that you two lads and Hewlett have returned, we have not the loss of a single man to mourn."

"You mean that we suffered no casualties whatever?" exclaimed Jack in great surprise.

"Not a man lost," was his commander's reply, "and we must have done inestimable damage to the Germans' base. Reports coming out of Germany claim that no damage was done, but I know better than that, for I saw two German war vessels sink with my own eyes. Besides, the damage by bombs dropped in Cuxhaven from the air must have been very great."

"It was," replied Jack quietly. "I can vouch for that."

"Which all goes to show," remarked Lord Has-

tings, "that no credence can be put in the German reports. They have evidently concealed the extent of the damage as well as possible for fear that it might create a panic in the interior."

"Is it true, Lord Hastings," asked Frank, "that you have been appointed commander of the new submarine, *D-16*?"

"It is," replied Lord Hastings, in some surprise, "but how did you hear of it? I thought the fact had been kept secret."

"We learned of it from Captain Jackson, commander of the cruiser *Emmerson*," replied Frank. "And are we to go with you?"

"Of course," was the reply. "I could never fill your places satisfactorily, and you know it."

"But I thought possibly, believing us dead, you might have made other arrangements."

"Well, so I did," was the reply, "but that can be easily remedied. I had selected my officers, but they shall give way to you."

"If there will be no difficulty about it, we shall certainly be pleased," said Jack.

"There'll be no difficulty," Lord Hastings made answer.

The three descended to dinner and at the conclusion of the meal, Lord Hastings brought up a new topic of conversation.

"I have an audience with the King to-morrow

morning," he told the lads. "If you like, I shall be glad to take you to His Majesty again."

"We shall indeed be pleased," replied Jack.

"Then you shall go with me," said their commander.

And so it was arranged.

Bright and early the following morning the lads were about, for each was anxious to see once more the monarch of the British empire. Both remembered how kindly he had spoken to them once before, and they wished to thank him for having secured them commissions as lieutenants in the British navy.

In the antechamber of the King, in Westminster Palace, they were forced to wait for some minutes while His Majesty disposed of weighty matters of state; but at last they were admitted into the King's presence.

The King arose as they entered, and all bowed low before him. King George motioned them to seats and himself sat down.

"These gentlemen I am sure I remember," he said, addressing Lord Hastings. "Are they not the young officers who rendered England such gallant service before the first battle off Helgoland?"

"The same, your Majesty," replied Lord Hastings.

"And have they performed any more wonderful

feats since they were made <sup>\*</sup>lieutenants?" questioned King George with a smile.

"They have, your Majesty. Would you care to hear a few of them?"

The King inclined his head in assent.

The faces of both lads grew red as Lord Hastings praised them to the King. He told of how they had been responsible for the trapping of the German fleet off the Falkland Islands; how they had dived under the mines of the Dardanelles; how, by their keen eyesight, they had been the first to perceive the German raid upon the Admiralty harbor in Dover, and of their recent dash from Hamburg, during which they had been instrumental in the destruction of four German cruisers.

"Enough! enough!" cried the King, raising a protesting hand, as Lord Hastings would have continued his narrative. "It were impossible for them to have done more and lived. And are you going to take them with you in the *D-16*?" he asked.

"Yes, your Majesty," was the reply.

"From the things you have told me I am sure you will not regret it," returned the King.

He arose and approached the two lads, who also stood. Then he laid a hand on the shoulder of each.

"I want to thank you for your services in behalf of England," he said quietly. "Your bravery shall be remembered."

"We want no thanks, your Majesty," said Jack, falling upon one knee before his King.

"Indeed we do not," said Frank.

The King motioned Jack to rise.

"As modest as you are bold, eh?" he said with a smile. "Nevertheless, you shall be remembered."

He turned to his desk, and scribbled a few words upon a piece of blank paper. He gave the paper to an attendant who stood near, with the one word:

"Hurry!"

The attendant bowed and departed. He returned in a few moments, however, and placed two small objects in the hand of his monarch.

The British ruler advanced toward the two lads, who, realizing that something unusual, to say the least, was about to transpire, stepped back in confusion.

"Stand still, sirs!" commanded the King.

The lads obeyed.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

D-16.

KING GEORGE V advanced quickly toward the two lads, and with a sudden movement pinned to the breast of each a little medal; then stepped as quickly back again.

Frank and Jack glanced at the insignias, and then, in spite of the presence of the King, who smiled at them good-naturedly, uttered exclamations of astonishment.

For pinned to the breast of each by the King's own hand was a Victoria Cross!

Their bravery and daring had brought their reward.

Both lads fell upon their knees before the King.

"Your Majesty——" began Frank, but the King interrupted him.

"Thanks are unnecessary," he said quietly. "You deserve them."

He turned from them to Lord Hastings, and after a few moments' conversation the latter rose and moved toward the door.

The King spoke a word of farewell to the two boys.

"I thank you for your loyalty," he said.

He signified that the audience was at an end, and Lord Hastings and the two lads left the chamber.

"Now," said Lord Hastings when they had returned to His Lordship's automobile, "if you wish, I shall take you for a look at the *D-16*."

Both lads clapped their hands in their delight.

"Do!" cried Jack. "Let's go immediately."

As they rode along toward the navy yard Lord Hastings remarked:

"The *D-16* will be much unlike any of the submarines with which you have heretofore had experience. Just as the whole plan of warship construction was altered when the monitors were first built, so will this new submarine—if it does what is expected—revolutionize the building of submarine craft."

"How do you mean that the monitors changed the whole method of constructing warships?" asked Frank. "Of course, I have read the story of the famous battle between the *Monitor* and the *Merri-mac*; but I never stopped to think what it meant in the way of warship building."

"Well," explained Lord Hastings, "up to the time of the *Monitor* there had been no thought of a turreted ship. When the monitors were first constructed everybody laughed at them. I remember reading, in an account of the civil war in the United



States, that they called the first monitor the 'cheese box on a raft.'

"As you now can readily see, there were two great advantages gained by the turret. One was that it presented a very poor target, because, unless a shell hit squarely, it would glance off. Second and greater advantage was gained when the turret became movable. It is no wonder that those of us who are familiar with the great battleships of to-day laugh at the puny efforts of the shipbuilders of seventy-five years ago."

"It is funny, isn't it?" said Jack. "Just to think that one of our big dreadnoughts could easily have sunk the entire Spanish armada without, probably, the loss of a man or a gun."

"Well," continued Lord Hastings, "if our new submarine shall prove what we hope, we shall be able to do as great things in our contests with the present battleships."

"As you boys well know from experience the greatest trouble with the submarine at present is its inability to stay under the water beyond a certain length of time, for lack of fresh air. You know the suffering you have experienced in your several raids—both in the Persian Sea and through the Dardanelles; how greatly fresh air was needed. Of course you had sufficient to sustain life; but you were not as fit as you would have been had there

been an abundance of fresh air. In both those raids the limit of submersion was practically reached."

"I suppose," said Frank, "*D-16* will have much larger air tanks than any of the others?"

"On the contrary," explained Lord Hastings, "they will not be so large, thus giving more room for the crew."

Both boys regarded their commander with surprise at this statement, but said nothing as he continued:

"Did you ever stop to think how a fish is able to live in the water?"

"Why," cried Jack, "it is his native element. I suppose a fish breathes water instead of air."

"That is very true," said Lord Hastings, "but it is the oxygen in the water that really keeps the fish alive. You are both, of course, familiar with the fact that water is a combination, so to speak, of oxygen and hydrogen. The symbol in chemistry  $H_2O$ —meaning two parts of the former and one of the latter. The oxygen is extracted from the water by the gills of the fish. Sir John G——," and Lord Hastings mentioned the name of one of England's foremost peers, "has proved by experiments that a device constructed after the model of a fish's gills can extract oxygen from the water just as the fish does.

"*D-16* is equipped with this device!"

Lord Hastings paused and looked at the boys in

a manner which indicated how great he considered this piece of information.

"Why," exclaimed Frank, "equipped with such apparatus the submarine could stay under the water for days."

"True," replied Lord Hastings, "with the result that if the proper precaution was taken it might go for months without ever being seen by the enemy—in fact the enemy might never know of its existence except by its work of destruction. The enemy would, of course, know that the damage was done by a submarine; but they would be unable to solve the mystery.

"The only trouble I can see," interrupted Jack, "is that you would have to spend too much time going from place to place. If we could only have a submarine that would make speed like some of the destroyers and at the same time could stay under water indefinitely, then we could puzzle the enemy; but our experience has been that submarine travel is pretty slow."

Lord Hastings smiled.

"You are a very observing young man, Mr. Templeton, which speaks well for your advancement in His Majesty's service. Now what would you think if I told you that, in addition to its ability to stay under water, *D-16* would be able to make twenty-eight knots an hour?"

Jack leaned breathlessly forward.

"Do you really mean it?" he asked.

"I certainly do; but here we are at the navy yard, and you shall see the craft for yourself."

Alighting from the automobile, the lads followed Lord Hastings to the pier where the *D-16* lay alongside. This new submarine had been launched some days before, but there was still considerable work to be done upon it before it would be ready for active service.

As the three approached the vessel a man attired in the dress of a laborer suddenly jumped ashore and made off rapidly across the shipyard. While there was nothing unusual in the fact that a workman should have done such a thing, there was something about the man that caused the trio to observe him carefully, while the same thought flashed through the mind of each:

"I don't like his looks! There is something wrong about him!"

Neither voiced his thoughts, however, and the man quickly disappeared among the débris that littered the navy yard.

After staring after him until he was out of sight, Lord Hastings led the way aboard the submarine, having first disclosed his identity to the proper authorities, and although none of the trio spoke aloud of the man who had jumped from aboard the submarine at their approach, the mind of each was

busy attempting to work out a solution of the unpleasant impression he gave.

The boys looked over the little craft thoroughly. It was considerably longer than any submarine they had ever seen, and it seemed much more roomy and comfortable.

"There will be even more room when this litter is cleared up," explained Lord Hastings. "What do you think of her?"

"She suits me tiptop," declared Frank.

"And me," agreed Jack. "I should say it is an excellent place to spend the next few months, while we are striking a few blows at the enemy."

For two hours they prowled about the vessel and at last, somewhat reluctantly, took their leave, that they might return to Lord Hastings' home in time for dinner. As they rode along the *D-16* was the sole topic of their conversation.

"How long before she will be ready to put to sea, Lord Hastings?" asked Jack.

"Not for two weeks, at least," was their commander's reply. "However, she will be put into commission at the earliest possible moment, you may be sure."

Both lads were plainly disappointed.

"I was in hopes she would be ready in a couple of days at the latest," said Jack.

"You are altogether too anxious," laughed Lord Hastings. "When we get started and are in some

ticklish situation, you may wish that you were back safely on land."

"Don't you believe it," said Frank. "We'll want to be aboard this craft every possible moment."

"Unless she is at the bottom of the sea and can't get up," said Lord Hastings dryly.

During the days that they now remained in London, awaiting the completion of the submarine, the boys visited it almost daily. Sometimes Lord Hastings accompanied them and sometimes he did not.

Two days later the lads encountered Walter Nelson and his sister Marion on the street. They were indeed glad to see the boys, and the lads accepted their invitation to dine with them.

They learned that Nelson would leave the following day upon a secret mission that might take him half around the world.

"And are you going, too?" asked Jack, turning to the girl.

"Of course," she replied. "You certainly didn't think I was going to be left behind?"

"Well, I didn't know," said Jack, somewhat taken aback. "I didn't figure it was a girl's place."

"It's not my fault," explained Walter with a laugh. "She insists on going, so what can I do about it?"

Jack thought he should be able to do a lot, but he didn't say so aloud.

The boys spoke never a word of the *D-16* to a living soul, for save some high officials and one or two others, who would never refer to the submarine under any consideration, the secret of its new devices was unknown. Of course, many knew of the construction of the craft, but its prowess, if a test should prove satisfactory, was known to only a very few.

And so, while Frank Chadwick and Jack Templeton, lieutenants in the Royal British navy, are waiting for their submarine to be put in shape that it may carry them to points far and wide in their work of destroying German vessels of war, we shall take a brief leave of them. In a succeeding volume, entitled, "The Boy Allies With the Terror of the Sea; or, The Last Shot of Submarine *D-16*," the parts played by these two lads in the as yet unwritten naval history of the greatest war of all time will be narrated for the benefit of those who have followed them already through many pages.

THE END.







